Schlump

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SCHLUMP

SCHLUMP

THE STORY OF A GERMAN SOLDIER

TOLD BY HIMSELF

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY MAURICE SAMUEL

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NEW YORK

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BOOK ONE

SCHLUMP was just sixteen years old when, in 1914, the war broke out.

That evening there was a dance at the Eagle Inn—the last of the season; the soldiers were expected the next day. And as the sun went down Schlump and his friend stole up into the gallery. They dared not go on to the dance floor. The big fellows, the twenty-year-old turners and locksmiths, had declared a jealous monopoly. They needed all the girls for themselves; they couldn't take a joke and they could be horribly brutal. Upstairs the boys leaned over the banister and stared hungrily down into the hall.

At midnight the trumpets blew a fanfare, and there was a fifteen-minute intermission to let the girls cool off. Schlump went out with his friend into the sweet summer night, under the big old maple trees.

The fifteen minutes passed and they turned back. And suddenly they came face to face with a wide chain of laughing girls, who barred the whole street. They were of Schlump's age and had gone to school with him, but naturally they were permitted to dance. In fact, they were the favorites among the older boys. From the middle of the chain one of them called out to Schlump: "Hey, darky, come over here to me."

Schlump saw the play of the lamplight on her blond hair, which now shone almost white. He did not credit his ears. But the slender girl broke loose from the chain, the others called him, and his friend said: "Go ahead, you've made a hit with her." Thereupon he went across and two hands seized him and drew him into a narrow alley, under the thick foliage, at the end of which a light shone dimly. This gave him courage, and he took her round the waist and pressed her close. When they came under the light he put his hand under her chin and looked into her face. "You're pretty," he said. "What's your name?" "Johanna," she answered, softly. "I've known you a long time." He drew her into the shadow and kissed her long and fervently on the lips. Then she whispered that she would let him dance with her; he could see her home afterwards, too, for she would get rid of the other boys.

He stole up again into the gallery and wanted to point her out to his friend. But he could not find her. Then they went home, and Schlump was joyous and light-hearted. He felt marvelously happy, and was convinced that in the whole world there could not be anything more beautiful than girls.

In a couple of days he had forgotten about Johanna.

Youth is prodigal; it lives in Paradise and doesn't know happiness itself when it meets it.

Schlump lived high up under the roof. His father,

Ferdinand Schulz, was a tailor. When he looked up from his needle his glance traveled over the colorful roofs of the old town and saluted the watchman in his tower. Schlump's mother had carried over into maturity the sense of fun and the sparkling eyes of her girlhood. In those days she had gone jumping over fences with the boys and looking for strawberries with them. On carnival days and at Whitsuntide she put on men's trousers, and went to sing in front of the houses, and filled her sack with pretzels and cakes. But under her blouse the little breasts began to grow and when she realized for the first time that she was a girl she withdrew quietly into the life of her home and dreamed of beautiful dresses and fine shoes. But when a festival came round she became lively and merry. And the boys would have eaten with the dogs in the kennel to get a smile from her.

At the age of seventeen she became engaged to the quiet, serious tailor and at nineteen she married him, because she liked his steady, honest life. Before long they baptized their first child, a girl that died soon after her birth. Then they remained childless for ten years. The tailor became his own master and set up shop at home, where he would sit sewing in the window. He aged rapidly. His short hair turned gray, and his voice sounded dull and unhappy. Then the wife gave birth to a boy, whom they named Emil, after her brother, the soldier. Emil was, according to the neighbors, the spit and image of his mother. As soon as he went to school he became the gang-leader

and chief fun-maker in the youngest class. The shouting of the children was heard a long way off when Emil Schulz was playing among them.

One day a number of booths were put up in the market place, where there was to be shooting at bird targets on Sunday. Emil tore the leather school bag from his shoulders and climbed up on the first booth, with the other boys at his heels. Shouting wildly, the young scalawags threw down into the street whatever they could lay hands on. But disaster came swiftly. The policeman grabbed Emil by the collar of his coat and roared: "You young—Schlump!" He was trying hard to find a word which would express his feelings and yet not be a swear-word—and this was all he found. And then Emil was treated to a thorough thrashing and ran home howling at the top of his voice.

Round the market place lived hard-working people who stood all day long in front of their stores and smoked cigars. Of course they had seen everything. And when the young hero stole quickly through the market place the next day, they called out to him: "Hey, you Schlump! Did somebody dust your pants for you yesterday?" And every one called him Schlump—and the name stuck for the rest of his life.

His parents had sent him to the Secondary School. It was a great sacrifice for them, for the fees were

high, and the tailor had no money. At Easter time of 1914 Schlump passed the finals.

The certificate was of little use to him; but he had a talent for drawing. He got a job in a spinning-mill and learned how to draw patterns and make new designs. But while he worked he thought of the girls and the war. A couple of his acquaintances had already become soldiers and he wanted to volunteer, too. He already saw himself in field-gray uniform, the girls staring at him and making him presents of cigarettes. Then he saw himself going to war. The sun shone, the field-gray figures advanced to the assault, one fell, the others ran on, they shouted and cheered, and the red trousers disappeared between two green hedges. In the evening the soldiers sat round a camp fire and talked about home. Beyond, in the darkness, stood the double line of sentinels, leaning on the barrel of their rifles, and dreaming of the homeland and of the return. In the morning camp broke up, and they marched off singing to the field of battle, where some were killed and some wounded. At last the war was won. Triumphant and victorious they returned home. The girls threw flowers from the windows and there were banquets without end. Schlump began to be afraid that he would be left out of it, and he wanted to volunteer. But his parents forbade it.

On his seventeenth birthday he went secretly to the barracks and enlisted as a volunteer. He was examined and assigned to the infantry. He came home

filled with pride. The parents had to give in at last. His mother wept. On August 1, 1915, he took his box and moved proudly into the barracks.

Schlump was wiry, lean, and well knit. He did not need the physical training of the recruit. His motions were as swift as a weasel's and he soon learned to handle his weapons skillfully. But in the beginning all his limbs ached and when he went up the steps to the latrines he would have liked to crawl on all fours.

The second week he was given office duty—he had to sweep the company offices and bring the coffee. On Tuesday he had just finished the washing, had taken his stool under his arm and run with his wash-basin into the barracks past the noncommissioned officers' quarters. Suddenly a hard hand grabbed him by the arm. "Hey, sonny, here's fifteen pfennig. Get me some coffee from the canteen." Schlump remained standing with the coin in his hand; the corporal had disappeared. He argued with himself: "If you go now," he said, "you'll have to wait a long time at the canteen. The old soldiers crowd the counter, and there's no chance for a recruit. You'll be too late to bring coffee for the squad. That means you're out of luck all round, with the squad and the corporal too. And a fine sap you'll look!" An idea came to him. He threw the coin into the coffee pot, and put it quietly down at the door of the barracks. Then he slid swiftly by the door of the noncoms' room, grabbed the big can, stuck his neighbor's glasses on his nose, and went

out to bring the coffee for the squad. On the way back he met the corporal, who was shaking his fist wildly and swearing like a truck-driver. Schlump put on a stupid look behind his glasses and went past him.

There was the lecture hour in the big drill hall. They came in denims, with their arms. Around them nothing but black filth and dirty windows. It was ice-cold in the hall, for the sun was only just rising. It set Schlump thinking of the front. Suppose it was just as dull out there, and just as cold?

They went out for the march. Schlump was merry again; he marched into the morning and sang jubilantly with the larks which rose from the overturned sods in the furrowed fields.

Acting-lieutenant Kieselhart was in charge of the training of the recruits. He had curious habits. He would slip quietly up behind a poor recruit, and grab him hard by the seat of the pants. Woe to the man whose behind was soft and slack; the officer's rage knew no bounds. One day he stood behind Schlump, whose pants hung way down behind because they were a couple of feet too big for him. But the officer's hand grabbed a bottom hard as steel. Whereupon he praised Schlump highly in front of all the noncoms, and never forgot him. Thus Schlump took his first forward step in his career (it was also to be his last).

One thing he didn't like: they still wore the blue peace uniforms with the glittering buttons. And he had not the patience to polish all these buttons until

they flashed and shone like white-hot iron. When the company fell in, he lifted up his coat tails, rubbed the buttons of his sleeves vigorously against his trousers seat, and then ran the inner side of his sleeve down his coat buttons. Then he stood fiercely at attention and when the sergeant came grimly down the line, he looked back at him with such bright and flashing eyes that the sergeant's gaze moved on to his neighbor, Private Speck. Speck was a shoemaker by trade. He used to rub and polish his buttons with pathetic eagerness every spare moment of time. But as often as he buttoned his coat he would rub his thumb against the glittering buttons and extinguish their light. And then the sergeant would come and let down a torrent of abuse on the unhappy shoemaker.

In this way Schlump got a lot of free time to pass in the canteen. The serving was done by two jolly, good-looking girls; one was buxom, blond and blue-eyed, the other was slim, with brown eyes and brown locks. Every morning the buxom one would set aside for him a roll and a piece of *Wurst*, which he would come and grab just before they set out for the morning's march. In the afternoon during the free hour the slim girl would feed him chocolate. And if no one was around she would take the piece of dark chocolate between her white teeth, and Schlump had to bite it off daintily. He did it with a great deal of enjoyment.

Once, when twilight had gathered thickly under the chestnut trees, Schlump saw the blond girl going for water. He hurried after her and gallantly worked

the pump-handle. Then he wanted to carry the bucket for her. But she refused, and it came to a friendly scrimmage which wound up in a long, long kiss. And just at that moment old Sergeant Bauch came out of the house and went by the two of them. Schlump had not been a soldier long enough to know a way out of every difficulty. Fearfully embarrassed, he snapped his heels together, so that they rang again, pressed the poor girl with an iron grip against his breast, so that her glowing face rested against his shoulder, and laid his right hand smartly against the seam of his pants, at attention.

The sergeant was a sensible fellow. He himself had two such sons in the war. So a gentle smile passed over his face and he went on.

The time passed swiftly. Their home training was to last eight weeks. Six were gone. The recruits were then transferred to Altengrabow for field exercises. Top-sergeant Bobermin, who kept them on the go every Sunday morning in the armory yard for three hours at a stretch, with his eternal "Down! Up! Forward! Down! Up! Forward!" so that the soldiers' girls, watching from the benches, began to cry —Top-sergeant Bobermin addressed them briefly, before they left, to the following effect: "Attention! You're coming to Altengrabow now! For field exercises! You're going to live in barracks from now on. And tie your arses on every evening, so they won't be stolen on you in the night. Forward, march!"

Every morning, very early, they went out for a

march, their packs on their shoulders filled with sand, ball-cartridges in the pockets of their ammunition belts. The morning was cold and gray, and the barracks had a cruel look about them. No color anywhere—the world was like an empty factory. The artillery regiment near by was still asleep and nothing stirred. They marched for a long time, till the mists divided, and the sun rose high, and the recruits perspired, and the sand gummed their eyes together and the sweat ran in runlets down their cheeks, leaving furrows behind, and dripping down on their ammunition pouches. Their belts pressed down on their hips and rubbed against them, the trench-spades clanked against their thighs, and the mess-kits banged against their heads whenever they shoved their packs up. Schlump had a full weight of sand on his back, for he had been caught stalling that morning. Corporal Muckenheim lifted the flap of his pack—he had forgotten to pull the strap in—and saw an empty sandbag. He made Schlump fill it to the top and when they returned from the march at midday, Schlump was to turn up in full marching kit before the noncoms' barracks and make the about-face one hundred times. Schlump perspired heavily and his heart burned with rage. At last they were permitted to stack arms. Then they shot at moving targets. This he liked; he enjoyed watching the dark heads bobbing up in the distance and taking potshots at them. It was fun, and filled him with an exciting anticipation of the fighting.

On the way back they had company exercises. The

captain sat on his horse and commanded. The non-coms perspired and looked angry though they carried no packs, and they vented their rage on the recruits. It was "Column right!" and "Column left!" and the recruits were made to run like hares through the sand. They were boiling with heat and rage. They passed the artillery regiment; the soldiers sat dozing on their caissons as they rolled out for target practice. In the little woods behind the sand hills they had to lie down, take their weapons in both hands, and pull themselves uphill by digging their elbows into the sand. This was the worst exercise of all. Some of the soldiers were so wild with rage that the tears came into their eyes. At last they were on top. Then the captain had the company set out and commanded on the march: "Blank cartridges—load! Lock! Cavalry attacking on the right! Steady! Aim! Fire!" The salvo crashed out, the captain's horse staggered and fell, the captain sprang clear. The horse had received a bullet in the neck. The guilty man was never found. The company marched back to barracks. Schlump was happy. The march had not over-strained him, for he was strong, but he was glad to have it over, just the same. For he hoped to get a couple of days' rest now.

The long line stood ready for mess. There was sauerkraut and pork. Schlump carried the full, boiling-hot plate into the mess hall and wanted to sit down at the first table. A cavalry man, tall as a telegraph pole, stood in front of him, and said: "What? The

lousy little recruits want to eat in here?" Schlump felt the scorn and contempt in the words: he grabbed his plate in both hands and flung it right into the ugly mug of the long cavalry man. The latter staggered and howled out at the top of his voice: the hot sauerkraut burned his face and the juice of it ran down his throat. His buddies sprang up from their places and threw themselves on the infantrymen who were coming in with full plates. On the instant a battle was raging, in which sauerkraut and plates were the arms and ammunition. On both sides men were wounded, and a strong detachment of infantry was needed to restore order. Schlump had managed to slip out of the mess. The cavalry men sat in the coop nursing their cracked heads.

The next night dysentery broke out among the recruits, and a red trail marked the path from the barracks to the latrines. The recruits were segregated and ate apart. Schlump was glad; he had been afraid that the cavalry would take revenge.

A week later they returned to the garrison.

On October 4 they entrained. The band played at the station, like a thing crying out in nameless pain. The people standing on the platform wept as though their hearts were breaking. The soldiers were excited and eager; the future loomed before them like some terrific monster which they had to conquer. The journey lasted five or six days. At Libercourt they detrained. Then they marched through dirty villages and

marveled at the bleak houses and the joyless railroad stations of the French. They could not see anywhere the pretty gardens which always lay in front of the farms at home: nor any of the snug rafter work under eaves shadowed by a mighty lime tree, as at home. The windows stared out like dirty holes, and dirty steps led from the street straight to the kitchen. Was this supposed to be France? They were met by old women with black beards and traces of snuff on their noses. The sky hung low over them, heavy as lead; a fine drizzling rain began to fall.

There was no end to the road. The recruits were heavily laden; besides everything else they carried packages in their hands, love-gifts which had been thrust on them at the last moment. Some of them had to drop out for a while: they sat down in the gutter and panted.

At last a halt was called. They stacked their arms. And after innumerable countings-off they were led to their quarters: an empty factory with broken windows through which the rain drifted in. On the floor there was some wet straw. It was dark, and the soldiers stumbled over the holes in the floor—the gaps where machines had been torn out. Some, who had candles, were envied by the others. Coffee and bread were distributed, and then they slept.

A couple of days later Schlump was sent for from company headquarters. "Here, you," the top said. "You've been a high school student, haven't you? Beat it over to Occupation Headquarters right away."

Schlump ran over at top speed and reported. He was told to remain in the offices and was excused from regulation duties. He made terrific efforts not to commit any blunders, and before long he was able to understand the Frenchmen he had to deal with. He had to be interpreter, and this was no easy business, for the Frenchies spoke a fearful local dialect. A couple of weeks later the report came in that the District of Loffrande was to be occupied, as the Quartermaster Corps was moving on from there. They could not find any one else for the job, so Schlump was ordered on ahead.

The evening of the same day Schlump set out. He was proud of himself. He went slowly, thinking of nothing but his new work. He was to be the sole administrator of three occupied villages—a seventeen-year-old recruit! Slowly he went through Deux Billes, where the recruits were making a racket in their factory. They had just come back from a march, and Schlump was glad that he had escaped it. The road now led into the open fields. Before and below him, scattered and half covered with mist, lay Loffrande, and to the right of it a couple of the houses of Martinval, which he had not yet visited; to the left, Drumez. He stopped under a signpost: on one side was painted, "To Occupation Headquarters, Mons-en-P."; on the other, "To Occupation Headquarters, Loffrande." Here, then, was to be his territory. This village seemed to have a friendlier look about it than the others. There were great, magnificent trees, and

the houses were hidden behind thick green hedges, through which there wound cozy little paths. Before headquarters—a small inn—a friendly little brook plashed and chattered. Schlump leaped over it and entered. On the left was the office—a large room with a table, several chairs, and a small stove. On the right was the barroom, a large kitchen. In the office a number of Q.M.C. soldiers were busy—three clerks, a sergeant, and a corporal. They handed Schlump a cigar box and told him that this was the safe. Then they drew his attention to a pile of papers and account-books, took up their packs, and left. Schlump remained standing alone in the office, and he began to feel slightly frightened.

He crossed the room. While the transfer was taking place it had become quite dark. He opened the door of the inn, and a cloud of smoke and a tumult of voices broke on him. The inn was crowded to the doors with French peasants. He could see nothing except the feeble light of a petroleum lamp in the background. At last, in a corner of the room, to the right, he found an empty stool, but the corner was quite dark. The hostess came over, and she already seemed to know who he was. He told her that he had no quarters for the night and asked her if she could help him. Thereupon a girl stood up, threw a shawl over her shoulders, told him something in which he caught nothing but the word *Monsieur*, and slipped quickly out of doors. A voice told him, out of the clouds of smoke, that Estelle had gone to find quarters for him,

but that it was difficult, for the troops weren't leaving till morning. Gradually his eyes became accustomed to his surroundings. He saw only young fellows and powerful men seated at small tables, playing cards. All of them were smoking, and in front of them stood tiny glasses filled with beer. In the background, by the lamp, a woman and her daughter were serving. No one paid the slightest attention to him. He had slipped into his pocket a couple of eggs, and now he wanted to have them boiled. At last he managed to find the host and made the request. The latter took them willingly and in a few minutes the woman brought him a plate on which lay the eggs and a knife. She wanted to chat with him, but he could hardly understand her. But he noted that she was afraid and wanted to be friendly.

After half an hour Estelle returned, red-cheeked and out of breath. She was blond and blue-eyed, like the buxom girl in the canteen. She took him by the hand, drew him outside, and led him to his quarters. Schlump was surprised and followed her cheerfully. Outside the stars were twinkling, and the night was cold. He asked her whether her name was Estelle. She nodded and said that she thought it was the name of a star. He showed her the star Stella, and she looked long at it. She seemed to be proud of it, but she also seemed to be astonished by the foreign soldier who knew her star. Then the two children went on silently, side by side, and Schlump thought of his mother. He felt as though his good angel were leading him. Sud-

denly she stopped short, showed him his quarters, and slipped away quickly. He could still feel her warm hand. Then he turned slowly and went into the house.

Schlump started back in terror when, the next morning, he approached his Occupation Headquarters. From the distance his ears were met by a tumult of voices, and as he drew close the men and women turned their faces toward him and became silent. To the right stood the men with their horses and to the left the women and girls of the village. Schlump realized that they were waiting for him to assign them their tasks. He began to perspire, to pull together everything he had learned at school, and feverishly prepared something to say to them. He had his little round cap on his head and was ashamed of the pants he was wearing—they were much too wide for him. He stepped in among them, took heart of grace, and addressed the women, of whom he was most afraid: "*Qu'est-ce que vous avez fait hier?* What did you do yesterday?" They answered him all at once, and the girls turned on him their sly and mocking eyes, laughing at him, while the women spoke half in amusement, half in contempt, and without let-up. He understood nothing, and said, "*Eh bien, faites la même chose aujourd'hui:* do the same today." They turned their backs on him, moved off a couple of paces, and seemed ready to burst with laughter.

Schlump was about to turn to the men when he saw a curious soldier coming down the street. The girls

greeted him at a distance, and Schlump heard them calling him Carolouis. The man had incredibly bent legs, and his hat sat at an angle on his head, but under the hat was an extremely good-natured face. "Buddy! I'm attached to Occupation Headquarters here, I'm quartered in Loffrande, and I'm in charge of the people here," he said, in the thick dialect of the Pfalz district. Thereupon he marched the men off.

Schlump went into his office and began to look for something to do. The woman of the inn stuck her head round the door and asked, "*Monsieur ne veut pas déjeuner?* Don't you want any breakfast?" Schlump crossed over, took a seat in the inn, at the same table with the host, Monsieur Doby, and partook of some warm milk and fine white bread. The innkeeper treated him with the greatest respect and tried hard to carry on a conversation with him, but Schlump could not make him out. Soon he went back to his office. Behind the office was a tiny room with a bed, and here he was to sleep from now on. He held out his hands to the stove and wondered how it was that in France the stoves had no doors in front, and that before they could be filled it was necessary to take all the pots off and remove the lids one by one. Then he began to rummage among the books and documents and tried to set himself to rights; he telephoned to all the listed numbers he already knew, and said he would thank the clerks if they would be helpful and let him know if he were to forget any of his du-

ties. For he was aware that there were some reports to be made out.

All this was soon done. Schlump sat down at the table, leaned his head on his hands, and listened to the ghastly melody which came droning over from the front. The cannons kept up an incessant fire, and the window panes rang and danced against the nails which held them in place, for the putty had long since fallen out. Schlump listened to the evil music and thought of his mother and marveled to find himself suddenly all alone in France, playing the rôle of mayor of a city.

Then he went out to look over the village, and whistled cheerfully as he walked.

Dull and heavy the gray sky spanned the earth. Schlump walked through the fields and saw the leaves falling in the wood and was glad to be alive. He was no longer conscious of the song which the cannons drummed into his ears all day long. The peasants worked away, and the horses neighed and the breath started from their nostrils and steamed in the bright autumn air. The men drained the water which had settled in the meadows and cleared out the ditches. Meanwhile Carolouis with his bow-legs went stumbling from one furrow to another, and the freshly turned clods shone in the sun which had just pierced through the mist.

Schlump walked along toward Martinval, where

the women were at work. He had assigned them to two granaries, one for the matrons, the other for the maids. They were sorting potatoes and were chattering over their work. The women hadn't much to say to him. But when he came to the girls, he noticed that one of them, who must have been stationed to watch for him, slipped in through the door. For the granary lay in a hollow and he could not be seen coming. He heard their singing break off suddenly. He stepped inside; they were hard at work. One applied herself to a little spirit-stove and offered him a cup of coffee. Schlump marveled at the threshing-floor, it had been swept so clean. Another girl showed him the sorted potatoes and those that were still to be attended to. Then they started singing again. Pretty Marie got up and danced, and they made Schlump sit down on a stool. The girl sang as she danced and cast him sidelong glances out of her dark eyes, and her black hair curled like serpents round her little head. Then she stepped aside and Céline danced and invited him to dance with her, and the rest sang for their dancing. And he noticed that the girls liked him very well, and he pressed them close while dancing with them in turn, all except Estelle, who had stayed sitting in the corner, gazing at him with great, still eyes.

Schlump went outdoors again into the autumn world, and the girls sang behind him and he kept seeing Marie's small dark head and Estelle's big eyes in front of him. He felt very happy with all these beautiful girls, but he did not even realize that he could

pluck many of these roses which leaned so sweetly toward him. The lucky boy satisfied himself with their fragrance without hankering after their honey.

That evening pretty Marie slipped into the inn and brushed past him and glanced at him often stealthily with her black eyes and then looked across at Estelle, who did not raise her eyes and let her hands lie quietly in her lap.

On Sunday Schlump had serious duties to perform. At nine in the morning he had to distribute the oats for the horses. The peasants sent their daughters, who waited for him with their sacks at the door of the barn. As soon as he had opened the door they swarmed up the steep ladder like a pack of wild cats, so that their skirts fluttered wildly and Schlump could count the dimples in their knees. Upstairs they played around like young goats, chased one another around, wrestled in the heaps of oats, jumped with their full weight on the scales, and then looked Schlump imploringly in the eyes, to get another kilo of oats out of him for the poor horses. For rations had been cut down to the bone and had to be measured out exactly.

At eleven o'clock all the male population between sixteen and sixty assembled for the check-up. Schlump read out their names: they answered "Present" one by one, and then stepped out of the line into the inn. Monsieur Fleury, a rich grain merchant, never did himself the honor of standing Schlump to a *chope* of beer. Fleury was a gigantic old bachelor. His broad

back ran up in a straight line right to the head, as if he were a steer. His lively blue eyes were sunk deep behind his thick white brows, and when he laughed his lips disclosed two rows of white teeth between his red cheeks. His voice had a deep drone, as though it came from the bottom of a wine-barrel. He said to Schlump, "That's not bad, eh? Seventeen years old and bossing all these old men and young women about!" When he had left the inn, Monsieur Doby, the host, sat down with Schlump and said, "I'll tell you a little story about this fellow Fleury—he's one old rogue. You know, of course, that he was the richest man in these parts. One day he set out for a journey with his horses, which were famous all over the country—he always had the finest mounts that could be got—to the town of Contigny. He passed the hardware store and wondered why the place was closed and why the door was draped in black. He hitched his horses, and since he knew the young wife of the owner very well, he went up the steps to find out who was dead. Upstairs he found the widow weeping over the coffin of her husband. He took off his hat, crossed himself, and said a prayer, as a man ought to. Then he sat down near the widow and waited reverently and in silence, for he respected her sorrow. After half an hour he stroked her hand, then took the handkerchief gently from her fingers and dried the traces of tears on her cheeks. But the widow began to sob again, her feelings overcame her, and she couldn't utter a word. Monsieur Fleury had all the patience in the world, and he

talked to her softly as if he were the curate and found high words of praise for her dead husband, so that her tears redoubled. And again he dried her eyes with her handkerchief and gently put his arm round her waist, for it seemed to him that she was going to faint from sheer sorrow. And she really leaned against his bosom, still sobbing, and she kept on sobbing and couldn't speak.

"Monsieur Fleury stroked the hair away from her face and took her under the chin and patted her cheeks and kissed her on the forehead and comforted her with kindly words.

"But they sat uncomfortably, so that her knee was pressed against the hard coffin. So he begged her to help him shift the coffin a little to one side, so that they could sit better on the sofa. Sighing, she obeyed him, and they took hold of the coffin, one at each handle, and pulled it over toward a corner. Then they sat down again on the sofa, and the horses in front of the house had to wait there till the next morning before they could see their master again.

"And as he rode away in the gray of the morning, he waved his whip tenderly back, and behind the curtain the widow sent a smiling greeting after him, till she saw him disappear in the distance. Then she wiped off the two heavy tears which had brimmed over, one on each cheek, and let the curtain fall."

Madame Doby, the hostess of the inn, had heard the last words of her husband's narrative. She seemed to know the story, and was deeply disturbed by her

husband. "Don't believe a word that Monsieur Doby tells you," she said to Schlump. "He's forever telling lies."

Schlump had settled completely into the life of Loffrande and had almost forgotten that he was a soldier. He prepared all his reports regularly on the dot and made it a point of pride never to miss a single date. On all agricultural matters he accepted the advice of Monsieur Doby, and all the instructions he issued seemed to show an astounding technical knowledge, and no one had any reason to be dissatisfied with him. Order reigned, and apart from the booming of cannons, carried over from the front, peace too reigned in the three villages.

There were none but peasants in Loffrande, with the exception of the smith. There was neither cobbler, nor tailor, nor grocer—nothing. The peasant women bought their soap, their pots, and their groceries in Mons-en-P. For this purpose they used to foregather every Tuesday, for they could not leave the Occupation District without written permission. Then they marched out in a body, and Carolouis rolled along behind them, shepherded them faithfully, and protected them from the M.P.'s and other people in authority. But one day Carolouis came back in a wild rage and swearing like a trooper. One of the women had called him *tête de baudet!* Curiously enough, he knew just what the phrase meant. On the whole he was not particularly intimate with the French language.

He marveled to hear the French say *fourche* when they meant a fork, seeing that in good German *Furche* was the furrow which the horses made in the fields. He shook his head and could not grasp the ways of the French. But from that day on he refused to accompany the women to Mons-en-P. Besides, he said, he had lots of work to do in the fields.

Schlump called for a couple of soldiers from the barracks, buddies of his. He wanted to hand over to them the management of the women. They were decent, fine fellows, who did their work admirably.

One day a soldier came, with his round hat standing up on his head as straight as a candle. He was twenty years old, by profession a junior clerk in an insurance office—a very decent young fellow. He knew that for work of this kind only the smartest soldiers were chosen, and he reported proudly to Schlump and looked down on him with some contempt. For Schlump had his round hat on at an angle, and the seat of his pants still hung down. The women assembled outside, in front of headquarters, and Schlump instructed the recruit in a few brief sentences. He had to set the women out in four files, company column, lead them regularly from store to store in Mons-en-P., then bring them back in orderly fashion to Loffrande and report to Schlump. The recruit went out, his head high in the air. The peasant women no sooner saw him than they set out ahead: some of them were already way up the road. Our recruit ran after them, took them by the arm,

and compelled them to wait for the others. The peasant women were amazed; they looked at one another and did not know what to say. The first four actually did stop, but the fifth avoided his arm and ran back along the road to the others. "*Mais il est fou, ce Prussien! Il est maboul, hein?* This German's crazy, he's cuckoo!" And they chattered and gabbled excitedly and angrily, gesticulating wildly with their thick umbrellas. But the recruit stood as firm as a rock. He became fiery red, he bawled and commanded, and finally got them more or less together and set off with them, marching in front and ahead as column leader. On the road he met a captain. He uttered the command, "Detail, attention!" and lifted up his own legs in the goose-step. The captain stood petrified with astonishment, then turned round and followed the parade up the street with his eyes. Schlump had been sitting with Monsieur Doby, watching from behind the curtain, and they laughed themselves sick.

The Amazons reached the market place of Monsen-P. safely—and all of a sudden they had disappeared! They ran off this way, that way, and it was all the recruit could do to catch the last one by a corner of her coat. But she too twisted from him, lost her temper, hit him over the fingers with her umbrella, and ran away, gabbling angrily. The poor fellow stood there, dazed, alone, in the middle of the market place, and wondered what to do next. He dared not return to company headquarters, for he was unable to report that he had carried out the command, nor did he dare

to return to Loffrande. So he remained standing there awhile. Then he turned round slowly and went thoughtfully into the canteen. All sorts of horrible thoughts came to him, and he feared that he would be brought up before a court martial. A long time he sat in the canteen, his elbows on the table, and his face reflected the fear that was in him.

But about five in the afternoon he saw a couple of familiar women's skirts crossing the market place, and in a few minutes all of them had assembled again. And peacefully, this time not in company column, they returned home.

Schlump slipped a couple of boiled eggs into his buddy's pocket to make up for his fright, praised him, and admitted that it wasn't such a simple task as it looked.

The week was drawing to an end and there was a whole raft of reports to prepare. A report for each question. For our excellent German army was organized down to the last detail, and there were so many superiors with administrative jobs way behind the lines. There were some who wanted to know every week how much hay there was on hand, others how much grain, how many potatoes and seed; others again how many shovels, spades, and whole sacks; others wanted to know how much plowing had been done that week and how much seeding, how much had been done before, and how much remained to be done; a fifth lot wanted population figures, also the

number of Russian prisoners at work in that district. Under the last heading Schlump was able to make a plain blank stroke every week. He worked industriously, made copies of all the reports, and kept them in a special folder. For often questions were referred back to him a second time, and it would have been uncomfortable not to know what he reported the last time. Then Monsieur Bartolomé came in; he was known as the best seed-sower in the village. Every day he would come for the keys of the seed-barn, and every time he would leave the door open behind him. And every time Schlump would curse like a peasant and shout after him, "*Clos chl'huis, nom di Diou!*" Whereupon Bartolomé would turn back, grin, and say in good French, "*Pardon, Monsieur, je n'y pensais pas.*" Then he would go off with the keys, rattling them against the huge wooden rafters from which they hung.

Hardly had he gone when the door opened again. But this time it was a wild little devil with black hair and black eyes: Marie. She skipped over to Schlump, seized him by both hands, drew him from behind the table into a corner where no one could see them. There she twined both her arms round Schlump and kissed him so hard that he could not catch his breath. But Schlump knew what to do. He grabbed her even more fiercely and kissed her more wildly. She struggled in his arms like a wild cat and tried to escape, so he lifted her up and carried her into the little cubicle, where there was nothing more than a bed and

an old dresser. He could feel her small, firm breasts against him and pressed her closer; she kicked and struggled more, and a hot fight followed, that immemorial and beautiful fight in which to go under is just as sweet as to triumph. And Schlump was just on the point of carrying off the victory and Marie was just on the point of going under with much joy—when the telephone rang.

Schlump was after all still a recruit. He obeyed nobly, let the devil lie there, abandoned his triumph, and went to the telephone. He lifted up the receiver and listened: "Enemy planes approaching from northwest: pass the message on!" He got this report almost daily, and often in the night. It was not without its point, for on one occasion the English flyers had thrown their filthy bombs down among the women and girls of Loffrande. One was killed and several wounded. But there was no factory siren in the village, and Schlump could not pass the warning on, for by the time he could reach the women in the fields or in the barns it would be all over.

Raging, he hung up the receiver and stormed back into the nest. But the bird was flown, and Schlump realized that he had been a jackass.

Marie never came again, and when Schlump met her she hardly looked at him, and she made it clear to him that she despised him. And then he realized to the full what an idiot he had been.

Years later, when the war was drawing to a close, a conversation took place between Schlump and an

old reservist, and they talked about life. And the latter said, "Listen, sonny: there's only one thing I'm heartily sorry for: the moments I could have been good to a pretty girl—and wasn't." Then Schlump thought of Loffrande.

When the peasants wanted to go into a neighboring village or into town to visit a friend or a sister, or to buy linen or a hat, they had to get a yellow pass from Schlump. Schlump had reserved Friday for these cases; they came on that day with their money to get the yellow *laisser-passers*. And when the peasants took the pen up to sign their names, they put down three crooked crosses, which looked like broken memorial stones. Schlump was amazed, and he told them that at home, in Germany, not only the peasants but even the cows could read and write.

In the afternoon the girls used to come, often a dozen at a time and more. There was the lovable little blonde, Céline, with lively eyes and a little nose like that of a mouse. She had a fine, tender skin, which shimmered softly in the sunlight, and she sniffed interminably through her fine, delicate nostrils. There was the dark Suzanne, with her big brown eyes and her brown locks, which waved down over her forehead to cover up the wickedest thoughts. She had the body of a gazelle and long, slender, voluptuous fingers. And then there was the pale Jeanne of the black hair. She held herself straight and had a soft, light step; she put her head on one side, and when she walked

the curve of her thighs came forward below her soft hips. And there were other lovely girls, in whose eyes an imp sat and laughed. On Sunday they all wanted to go to church to Monsieur Cahot, the handsome, earnest curate. Big Marianne, too, she of the full red cheeks and the high, strong breasts and the beautiful teeth. With her was little Anne. She had eyes that were blue as a lake and two tiny breasts and a tender blue-shimmering skin. She hardly ever spoke, but she always watched, and often she breathed hard and then her eyes flashed like diamonds in moonlight.

It was evening by the time he had got rid of all of them. For the girls were high-spirited and they made life difficult for poor Schlump. They crowded around him and talked at him at top speed, all of them at once, saying the craziest things, so that he could understand nothing. Then they burst out laughing, and nudged each other with their elbows and looked straight into poor Schlump's face with their dazzling eyes. When he wrote out passes for them, they dictated the craziest words, then took the passes along as they were. At last they were gone, and Schlump heard the receding patter of their footsteps.

He straightened out his desk hastily, for he was hungry by now, and went over into the inn. He had just locked the door behind him, and stood in the darkness, feeling for the other latch. Suddenly he was seized by two strong, soft arms, and two warm lips were pressed to his and suddenly withdrawn; then two small, slender arms seized him and two soft cool

lips kissed him and let him go—and they were off. And Schlump just heard the rustle of two skirts. But he knew who it had been: the big Marianne and the little fifteen-year-old Anne.

Madame Doby never laughed at her husband's jokes. She was sunk in care. She had two unmarried daughters in the house and two strong sons in the fields, and it was wartime. And you never knew what could happen. Suppose the Germans should be forced to retreat and dig their trenches right through the village? Suppose her two sons should be sent out to forced labor, or put into a German concentration camp? She suffered, and her husband's jests tormented her. She was good to Schlump. She knew that he could have made her suffer a great deal if he had been bad. She knew, too, that he had a mother, who worried just as she did. She asked Schlump to send his mother greetings from Madame Doby. The women were at one in their suffering. Schlump had not the slightest idea how clearly his mother knew what was yet in store for him. And when he saw the careworn face of Madame Doby, he began to understand something about the torment which the war prepared for those who bore no weapons, but who knew that their dearest ones were in danger.

But for the time being things went well with him. Once a week he used to go up to Mons-en-P., visit his company, and go over to the kitchen and get a box of canned meat instead of rations. He turned the

box over to Madame. Then she would take down a bundle of kidney beans from where they hung on strings outside under the roof and make him a *purée* and cook the meat. They all ate at one table and from one pot. Estelle served and gave him the choicest morsels. One day he was alone with her and five-year-old Hélène. Flore, the big sister, and the others, had gone out to their work. The three of them played together and ran after one another. He caught Estelle, seized her by her firm arms, and pressed her to the wall and kissed her. Whereupon she took his head between her hands and drew it close to her and whispered, "*Je vous aime*—I love you." Schlump was frightened and let her go. He was taken aback and turned red. For he knew well that she was worth more than all the others put together. But she watched him, and in that moment she knew that he did not return her love. She went out and for a long time did not show herself. A couple of days later she moved out into the house of her *marraine*, her godmother, and helped her tend the cows and skim the milk. It was only when Schlump had to say farewell to the village that she came to see him, helped him roll up his overcoat and fill his pack.

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But the peasants, too, were not cheerful. For they had no inn, like Doby. And many of their fields lay unworked; only those fields were worked which lay along the road. There were not enough horses in the village, and the cows became fewer in number. There were no more buying and selling and no more market

days; and even when there was money, there was nothing to buy. As a matter of fact there was no such thing as property any more, there were no rich and no poor. Every one who was strong and healthy enough had to work. The fields were worked by every one alike, no matter to whom they belonged. On Monday Gaston, the black-eyed field foreman, would go up to Mons, to the city hall, and get money. Friday evenings the pay was handed out. They all came together before Schlump's office, the prosperous peasants and the poor ones, the women and the girls. And they made a fearful noise under his window, and it was all Schlump could do to count the money out. But in order to keep the girls quiet, he had put Carolouis over them and had armed him with an old unloaded carbine—one which the cavalrymen had thrown away and which he had found in the ammunition box under his bed.

Carolouis paraded haughtily with his bowlegs before the girls, his carbine on his shoulder, and rolled his eyes and looked fierce. But the wicked girls were not afraid of him. They crowded thickly around him and then scattered with a tremendous noise. And little Berthe put her leg out behind him, so that he stumbled and waved his weapon wildly in the air and at last crashed down on his nose. When he had scrambled to his feet the carbine had disappeared. The honest Rhinelander trembled with rage. He shook his fists and cursed so furiously that the moon disappeared behind a cloud. The girls were afraid, they

became silent and stood nice and quiet in front of the office, like hens in front of the locked barn door. But after a while Carolouis stopped swearing, and when he saw them standing there so obediently his rage melted and the moon came out from behind the cloud; Carolouis smiled again and the girls breathed easier.

And Schlump was able to go on counting undisturbed: first the men, then the women, and last the girls. Then he went into the inn, smoked cigarettes, and played cards with the younger fellows. He would have forgotten the war entirely if the windows had not rung so loudly from time to time with the noise of the cannons.

It was forenoon. Schlump sat at his table and wrote to his mother. The door opened and an M.P. came in, with his brass shield on his sleeve, and clicked his spurs together. He stepped up to the table, opened a notebook, and let Schlump sign. Then he tore out a sheet and laid it down.

"Does a certain Madeleine Thouart live in this Occupation area?"

"Yes," answered Schlump; "in Martinval, in the first house."

"She was caught yesterday without a pass on the road to Thumerie." The M.P. saluted and went out, jingling his spurs.

Schlump examined the sheet more closely and scratched himself behind the ears. Some kind of pun-

ishment he would have to impose, for the sake of discipline: that much he knew. And he also knew that there were two kinds of punishment—fine and imprisonment. But Madeleine was a poor girl, and he had not the slightest idea where he could imprison her. For the village had neither a lockup nor anything that resembled one. He was mightily embarrassed and cogitated long on the difficult case.

Then an idea struck him. He remembered a cozy little house which had been abandoned by its owners. The windows of the house were just high enough to prevent any one from jumping out. He went over and examined it in more detail. One room was in good condition. The stove seemed to be in order, and the windows closed properly. Schlump had the house cleaned and put in condition. He locked the back door and took the key of the front door with him. He had a supply of wood brought in, some coal, a chair, a bed, and a table. Then he sent for Madeleine. She appeared soon enough and remained standing timidly at the door. She had reddish hair and honest blue eyes.

"Madeleine," said Schlump, "you were caught by an M.P."

"Yes, sir," she answered; "I wanted to buy a new dress for my little sister, Lolotte. You can believe me, sir—there was nothing else. The old dress is so torn, and the child is terribly wild."

"That's all right," said Schlump, worried, "but I have to punish you, don't you see? Because if I let

you get away with it, all the village will be running out and making a fool of me!"

"Oh, what are you going to do with me?"

"I must lock you up for a day, Madeleine."

"*Mon Dieu!* But where? We haven't got a lock-up in the village."

"Now, now, you don't have to be frightened, Madeleine. I'll fix you up so you won't freeze, and it won't be so awfully bad."

Thereupon she became silent, then suddenly looked at him proudly. "Do whatever you like, sir," she said, and turned to go.

Schlump ordered her to appear on Wednesday afternoon at five o'clock. She was to bring bed-linen with her and supplies for one day. Monsieur Doby laughed and asked him whether he was going to check up every couple of hours. But Schlump refused to listen to his jokes now, for the whole business was rather painful to him. She turned up promptly enough at five o'clock, with her basket on her arm and a package in her hand. She treated him disdainfully and hardly looked at him. Schlump took the enormous key and went out with her. Behind him Monsieur Doby laughed. Schlump unlocked the little house. He had asked Madame Doby to place an extra pot of coffee on the stove, so that Madeleine might not find prison life too hard. She put her basket down on the table, looked around, sat down at the table, took out needle and cotton from her basket. "Tomorrow, at

twelve o'clock, I'll bring you some warm food from Madame Doby's," said Schlump, "and then at six in the afternoon I'll come and let you out."

She did not answer. But suddenly she stood up, looked at the bed, and looked at Schlump again with big eyes. Then she glanced again at the bed and again at Schlump and looked very red and embarrassed. Schlump could not understand her. And so they kept staring at each other for a long time, and in their embarrassment had no idea where to begin.

"But, Monsieur," she said at last, "don't you see I can't . . ." and here she stopped helplessly and threw a glance under the bed and looked again at him in still greater distress and embarrassment.

At last he understood her. "I'm coming right back," he said, and disappeared.

He hurried along and came to the fence between the inn and the adjacent house. He took one of the many chambers which adorned the tops of the gray palings like so many helmets. They had been carefully arranged there, with their handles all facing front, like a corporal's squad. Near by, on another fence, was the neighbor's squad, with their handles all turned the other way, showing him their backs. Schlump took the first chamber, a white one, probably a lance-corporal or at least a private first class.

With this absurd utensil he marched back the length of the village, greeting the people, who just then happened to be returning from the fields; they were astonished and asked him whether somebody

was dying, for he was carrying the chamber before him with a certain solemnity, just like a priest.

But Madeleine thanked him cordially and was no longer angry with him.

Papa Rohaut stood before Schlump's door and twirled his hat between his big fingers. He had three daughters, pretty as pictures, and the oldest of them was Jeanne, with the plump thighs. He begged Schlump to see to it that his fields should be worked now, for they were lying fallow for the second year. "Certainly, Papa Rohaut," said Schlump, "but you know we have so few teams that we have to work the fields along the road. Because when the major comes on his rounds of inspection from Thumerie he wants to see people at work." Schlump was sorry for him, he looked so miserable, and Monsieur Doby considered old Rohaut a good sort, because he was simple and never kicked. Just a few days ago Rohaut, coming to the inn, had taken off his gigantic high boots outside, and had come in, as always, in his clean wooden sabots to pay his respects to Madame: Monsieur Doby had seen the boots standing outside and had filled them to the top with slop water. As it was dark when Father Rohaut went out, he shoved his foot nobly into the boot. And though the brown sewage squirted right up into his face, he tried it again with the other foot, to see whether the same astonishing thing would happen again.

So Rohaut went out sadly from Schlump, and

scarcely had he passed across to pay his respects to Madame Doby when a fearful disaster occurred in the street outside. The little boys had cut themselves out wooden swords, had taken down the chambers from the palings and put them on their heads, and were playing soldiers and robbers. Little Ernest, the child of Widow Foulard across the way (her husband had fallen at Maubeuge in 1914), went at one of the robbers for all he was worth. The latter, not being a coward, came back at him, threw his sword away, and smote his enemy with bare hands on the chamber helmet so that it went down over his ears. Ernest seized the pot with both hands and tried to lift it off —but it wouldn't budge. Thereupon he began to yell as if he had been stuck on a roasting-spit. And as the voice in the pot couldn't find its way out, there was heard a weird sound—like that of a bluebottle caught in a watering-can dashing its plump body against the metal walls, humming and droning till it finds the way and crawls out of the hole. But Ernest couldn't find his way out of the hole. The boys stood around him, holding their sides with laughter, till one of them became anxious and tried to help the unfortunate Ernest. He took hold of the accursed pot with both hands and lifted. But Ernest roared even louder and the terrified boy let go. Meanwhile the mother had arrived hurriedly on the scene, and she too seized the pot with both hands, and lifted it, together with her son, right into the air, so that the little fellow jerked all his limbs about and sent forth a fearful

wailing. The neighbors came running up, too, and tried everything, till they finally began to wring their hands. "He'll starve to death," said Madame Besnarde, and began to weep. In her despair the mother brought the boy in his iron mask to Schlump and asked him whether the poor boy would have to pass the rest of his life in the chamber. And when the pot became too small, what would happen? a woman asked, terrified. Schlump was of the opinion that they would have to go to the doctor; he would give them all passes. They thanked him for his wonderful idea and begged him to make out the passes at once. But Schlump explained that he wanted to go along. In the meantime a crowd had assembled in front of the Occupation office, and it divided respectfully as Schlump appeared, accompanied by the afflicted mother and the boy in the chamber. Then they fell in behind Schlump, and the procession went up to Mons-en-P. In Deux Billes the villagers came running up, and the unhappy mother, still weeping, had to tell the story again, and the boy began to hum and drone loudly once again inside his prison. They continued on their way, with the villagers of Deux Billes added to the procession. In Mons-en-P. they called out the doctor, and every one remained silent while he tried his best. Then he pulled a serious face, laid his head on one side, screwed up his eyes, and thought awhile. Finally he said that this case was beyond him, and they would have to go to the tinsmith. This all of them could see, and they agreed with the experi-

enced doctor, and the mother became filled with hope again. In the meantime, however, a huge crowd had gathered round Schlump and his faithful retinue, and there was such excitement and such a tumult of voices that it was hardly possible to hear the droning in the pot. At last they came to the tinsmith, and Schlump went inside while the crowd waited.

The captain who was in charge of the battalion of recruits and who lived opposite the tinsmith's happened to be an excitable gentleman. When he saw the huge and animated crowd, heard their loud voices, saw the excited gesticulations, he was convinced that an assault on the troops was about to take place, and the people were being armed in the middle of the day by the tinsmith. He leaped to the telephone, called out the guard, and issued the alarm to the entire garrison. In five minutes the troops arrived at the double, bayonets fixed, to the rolling of drums. They surrounded the inhabitants of Mons-en-P., Deux Billes, and Loffrande, and a lieutenant stepped forth with drawn sword and called on them to surrender. In their terror the poor people called Schlump out of the smithy, and he, stepping up to the lieutenant, explained the situation in a few words. The lieutenant smiled, shoved his sword back into its scabbard, issued the command to lay down arms, and turned the detachment over to a sergeant. Then, together with Schlump, he entered the smithy. The tinsmith had set to work with his big wire cutters and was opening up the pot. The boy stood there, motionless. The mother

called to him, loudly, to keep his eyes closed. A moment later she was holding her son in her arms, and amid tears was wiping away the two strings which hung from his nose all the way down to his chin.

The lieutenant ordered the soldiers back to barracks, and went across to the captain, who in the meantime had put on his helmet, to report. But Schlump, followed by his faithful subjects, had set out in triumph again for Loffrande.

Madame Gaspard, of Drumez, stood before Schlump, resting her bony hands on her hips. She had wooden shoes on and she looked like an old, withered Christmas tree. She was as tall as a hop pole, and two thin sticks of legs, stuck into woolen stockings, issued from her shoes. The long black dress lay in thick folds about her waist, and a woolen jacket was drawn tight about her narrow breast and went halfway up her withered throat. She had a pointed Adam's apple, like a man, and it looked out between the two corded throat muscles which supported her sharp chin. Her face resembled an old Camembert cheese; a pair of gray eyes looked icily out from behind her colorless eyelids, and no eyebrows were to be seen on her sharp rectangular forehead. She really was as thin as a hop pole; only the hips stood out at right angles, like a pair of branches on which no green twigs would ever grow again. "I want to make a complaint against Madame Fontaine," she said, and looked at him angrily.

"Yes?" said Schlump.

The hop pole suddenly became animated and began to speak very swiftly.

"Yes! Do you know what that woman said? She said I told Madame Aulnoy that Madame Patard said that she had slept with Carolouis, in one bed. And of course she did sleep with Carolouis in one bed, and she still does, because I know absolutely for certain, or my name isn't Madame Gaspard, and they aren't ashamed to sleep with a Prussian—and a bow-legged one, at that. But these persons are so mean and so impudent that they say I said it to Madame Aulnoy, and Madame Aulnoy is my witness that I never spoke about that creature. But Madame Fontaine is a liar, and she ought to be in prison anyway; she isn't ashamed to let her cow graze in my meadow every day, and once I caught her stealing clover, and her brother too . . ."

"Wait a minute, wait a minute," cried Schlump in between. "There's Carolouis, outside. He can bring Madame Fontaine here." Schlump was happy to shut her up for a moment.

"Certainly! Bring that woman here! Tell him to bring Madame Fontaine."

Schlump opened the window and called Carolouis over and told him to bring Madame Fontaine, as Madame Gaspard was waiting and had lodged a complaint against her.

In five minutes Madame Fontaine was there. She wore a filthy woolen shawl round her shoulders, and

a pair of felt shoes—or what looked like felt shoes—on her feet. She immediately put her hands on her hips, which spread out broad, healthy, beside those of Madame Gaspard. Her glance shot past Madame Gaspard and she opened her mouth. Her face was as black as a stove door, and round her mouth a long gray and black beard grew in separate tufts, making that part of her face look like an English park. But on either side of her eagle nose sparkled and glittered her vivid coal-black eyes, set behind long black eyelids, while above them hung the bushy gray eyebrows. The black hair which covered her head was twisted into greasy locks which looked as though they had never been washed. She opened her mouth, and said, *"Eh bien, quoi?"*

"Madame Gaspard says that you said that Carolouis . . . or how was it, Madame Gaspard?" asked Schlump. But when the black-faced woman heard the name of Carolouis she started as if she had been stung.

"What?" she shrieked. "What? Has she been gabbling again about Carolouis? And she's had three husbands, that woman . . ."

"You had three husbands," burst out Madame Gaspard, "and you had them all at once, not one after the other, as I did, and . . ."

"Three husbands, and she slept with the hunchback servant, the shameless creature, the stuck-up cow, the dirty—"

"Dirty? Who's dirty? Who's full of lice, like a

Prussian? Who whores around and goes out stealing and picking things up at night? And who was it played the pimp for poor little Célestine and gave her to the M.P. for a couple of *sous* so that she had a baby by him? And who—"

And she lifted her hands as though she wanted to grab the other woman by the hair, but the latter retreated and also showed her claws; and suddenly they went at each other, their mouths, with their tooth-gaps, opened—whereupon Schlump burst into such immoderate laughter that the two women stopped, stupefied, to look at him, then turned round and ran out of the door. As they did it simultaneously, they collided with their backsides, so that the door swung crazily back and smashed the latch against the wall.

Madame Doby came horrified out of the kitchen and stared at Schlump, who wiped the tears from his eyes and pointed at the hole in the wall.

Summer was gone long ago, and autumn too. The days followed in which it is hard to say whether winter has come yet. Now and again a damp wind passed the gable ends and shook them slightly; the bushes dripped from the eternal mist, and the latches were wet, and at regular intervals a heavy drop would splash down from the gutter on to the stone below.

The threshing had begun. The threshing machine sang shrilly, so that you could hear it all over the village. And when they fed it too heavily the monotonous melody went up by a third, and then fell down again

to the old tone. The cannons in the distance beat rapid time to the tune. The girls handed up the sheaves, and every now and again a boy would jump into the barn among them and pinch them by the leg, so that they screamed loud and merrily. The wagon, piled high with yellow sheaves, went shaking past the Occupation office, and avoided the other wagon which came back, carrying the threshed straw to the fields, where they were building a tremendous haycock. The little major in charge of the agricultural department—the one to whom Schlump sent his reports every week—had been up to the village a couple of days before. He asked Schlump all about the provender that had been laid in, about the hay, about the seed that was set aside, and about the butter he could deliver. Schlump reported, gave the figures in a brief, businesslike way, and said that he had the churning done on Thursdays, so that the peasants could make prompt deliveries. He had appointed an energetic mayoress of the village, who looked after this and settled accounts with him every week. The major seemed satisfied. He clucked his tongue, pulled at the reins, and rode off.

After him Louis Gez came into the office. He was exactly four feet ten in height and, though his shoulders slanted, just as broad. Shamelessly, he wore a pair of wide corduroy breeches, which were tied together at the bottom above his shoes; also a red neckcloth and a round cap which slipped back on to his neck.

"You ought to grow a pair of mustaches," he told Schlump. "That's what the girls like. I've got a real beauty for you, a fine, healthy, snappy girl—you know—but I want you to do me a favor—"

Schlump knew whom he meant; it was Hélène, across the way in Marchelles, but she was known far and wide: she had already bestowed her favors on the entire artillery regiment stationed over there.

"What's on your mind?" asked Schlump.

"I got no chaw left, Monsieur: and you know, a man without a chaw is just half a man."

"All right," said Schlump. "I'll be up in the canteen tomorrow, and I'll get you some, and some snuff for your neighbor, too, for Madame Héaulmière. But listen, Louis; is it true what they're saying about what happened in Arras?"

"Is it true? Sure. But those times were different. There used to be plenty of chaw and cognac—cognac! Say, can you get any cognac in the canteen?"

"You'll get half a bottle tomorrow. That's my promise, Louis."

"Thank you, Monsieur Émile: thank you. You know, in those days there used to be chaw and cognac —rafts of it. It happened to be the Fair in Arras, and there was a prize bull exhibition, you know. And there were the fat peasants walking through the streets, with their heavy sticks, calling after the girls and twirling their mustaches, and clinking the money in their pockets, and they looked just like their own bulls. And they

had horns on their heads all right, but you couldn't see those." And Louis winked joyously and significantly. "I was attending to the big dynamo which stood near the movie on the fair-grounds. It went all by itself, and all day long I was in the saloon on the market place with pretty little Céline. That was a baby for you! And just when I was drinking my cognac they began to run and yell on the street outside, and the peasants came jamming into the saloon, with their faces red as turkeys, shaking their sticks in the air. And the women screamed, and one of them actually broke in through the window and cut her cheeks wide open. In just one second the room was full and the market place was as dead as a graveyard. I went to the door, and there in the middle of the market place was a tremendous bull. I tell you, a monster, with awful horns and a huge neck. There he was, his front feet set firm and his head tossing up and down just like a horse when he gets to feeling good. And there—I can still see it—right in front of him, not ten paces away, was a kid, playing near the well, a little girl, with no idea of anything, just singing and romping. The women opened the windows, and they began to scream and wring their hands, and didn't know what to do. Then suddenly the door opposite opened, and a woman flew out. A weak little creature —I bet you she didn't weigh ninety pounds; she ran right past the bull, grabbed up the kid and flew back, while the bull just stared after her like the stupid

animal he was. Then the women began clapping their hands and applauding, just like the crazy women in the opera in Paris.

"I was just ashamed of myself, and I was mad, because as it was the women were already just too damn cocky. But I wanted to show them something. I went slowly up to the bull, and the bull began to paw and buck again: I stand right in front of him and he stares right at me. Then, just like lightning, I grabbed him by the horns—and then, back—back—there the son of a gun was, lying on the ground.

"Well, the women just went crazy, and they applauded and cheered, and you know, Monsieur Émile —after that I had a marvelous time. Wonderful piece of work—" and he laughed and spit and stood rocking himself on his short legs.

Schlump promised him again to bring the chaw and the cognac. But Louis told him that wasn't why he had come to see him. "You know," he said, "I'm a poor man, and little Célestine, who got that baby from the M.P., lives with me. And we need wood. Won't you give me a pass so I can go out in the woods over round Marchelles and gather some?" Schlump gave him the pass, because he knew that Madame Drouart lived over there and Louis was in love with her.

His buddies, the recruits who had come with him from his home town, had long since been sent up to the front. Others had come to take their place and

were now being trained in Carvin. Only a couple of clerks had been left from the old outfit.

The winds blew colder and Christmas was drawing close. One day the message orderly, who brought instructions daily from headquarters and took his reports back, told him that he would probably have to arrange quarters for a Q.M.C. detachment before long, and then he would be relieved. An hour later the telephone rang: Corporal Nebe of the Mons-en-P. Occupation office. This was the man who used to get Schlump's deliveries of eggs and butter and transmit them to the hospitals. Schlump couldn't bear the sight of him because the supplies were never big enough for him, and he was mean and bad-tempered. The corporal told him that in two days a Q.M.C. detachment would be coming round, and then Schlump would be relieved. He would shortly get his marching orders. Schlump hung the receiver up angrily, because he had felt the mean joy in the other's voice.

In the afternoon Schlump went up to Mons-en-P. at top speed to get more definite information. The days were short, and when he arrived at Occupation offices it was already night. He went in and reported. The corporal let him stand there for quite a while. Then he got up, spread his legs out, shoved his hands deep into his pockets, laughed, and said contemptuously, "Well, boy, you'll be going to the front, and when your mamma hears of it she'll be crying her snotty nose off."

Schlump was only seventeen, and the feeling of

honor was still strong in him. It was as if some one had laid a filthy hand on what was most sacred to him. The same feeling came over him as on that day when he dashed the plateful of hot sauerkraut into the face of the cavalry man. Something red and black danced in front of his eyes, and he was gripped by indescribable rage: he flung his fist into the corporal's face, so that the man fell. What followed was not clear in his mind. He turned and ran. He heard a fierce shouting behind, chairs falling, a ringing and clattering like the clash of arms. He thought they had called out the guard. But he had already disappeared into the darkness. He ran and ran, down toward Deux Billes, not knowing whither to turn. He came by a lonely little house where he knew the people. He went in and greeted them as calmly as he could.

He sat down near the stove. The people were not surprised, for he had come in more than once to have a little chat with them.

"*Chauffez-vous, Monsieur,*" the woman said, and she shoved a chair toward him; then she gave him a cup of coffee and a piece of sugar. She apologized that she didn't have any cognac for him, and then she began a plaint about the wretched war. Schlump listened with half an ear and answered abstractedly, for he was also listening to the night outside. Every moment the guard might turn up. And with every noise he caught, he shrank on himself and his heart beat heavily. And when he heard steps outside, he leapt up in terror from his chair, then mastered himself,

sat down again, and talked wildly. Madame asked him in amazement what was the matter. He tried to smile and said, "Nothing." Then suddenly he no longer felt safe in this place; he said a hasty good-by, and Madame shook her head when he was gone, for he had interrupted her in the middle of a sentence and had fled.

Schlump listened in terror to hear if any one was coming; then he flew across the field to a clump of bushes. He hid behind them, holding the twigs together, and cowering on the ground, trying to collect his thoughts.

"Now you're a deserter," he said to himself. "And when they get you you'll be court-martialed for rebellion in the presence of the enemy. You get shot for that. And what about your father? And your mother? Think of the pain you're going to cause them." He saw them in the house; he saw them starting up in terror when the bell rang; they would be ashamed to face their neighbors, afraid of them. He made up the craziest plans to spare them this agony. He wanted to go and confess everything and beg them to have mercy and take into account the provocation. But then he saw those solid fellows sitting there and himself standing helpless in front of them, unable to get a word out. No: it couldn't be done.

But it was night now, and if he ran off he could travel a long way. He might be able to run away to Holland. Sure: but it was a march of several days to Holland, and he had no provisions: that would be the

least of his worries: he had no pass, and he would be seized by the M.P.'s, because the alarm had surely been sent out everywhere. Wait! He could steal back into his own office and make out a pass for himself under another name, and stamp it a couple of times. Oh, but they'd surely occupied the office by now, because that would be the first place where they would look for him.

He could think of nothing. And he cowered on the ground and the hours passed. He began to freeze and his teeth chattered.

He fell asleep, woke up, and fell asleep again. Between sleep and waking fantastic ideas pursued him.

A faint light was beginning to show in the east. Schlump set out on the road to Séclin. He kept a careful lookout on every side of him. Nothing to be seen. Everything was quiet. In the distance a dog bayed. In Séclin he had a friend, a telephone operator who had been detached from the recruits for service at the same time as himself. He would ask him whether a desertion had been reported.

Schlump sought out his friend's house—he was quartered with an old couple—and was informed that his friend had night duty till eight in the morning. That was a good break. Very carefully he stole over to the telephone post and woke up his friend, who was lying fast asleep on a bench. His friend knew of nothing. Then Schlump breathed easily. He suddenly became quite calm. "That corporal has something on

his conscience," he thought. "I heard something about his not delivering the eggs and butter in the hospital. I know he sent supplies home and gave some to the sergeant who's in the game with him. And I also know he has a couple of women in Mons-en-P., and he gives them all sorts of things." Schlump remembered the time when the corporal asked him to look after some pigeons belonging to his women. "He's got something on his conscience and he didn't report me." But then it occurred to him that a lieutenant of Hussars had been sitting in the Occupation office—and him he didn't know. He had seen and heard everything. He surely wouldn't let the incident pass. He was an older man, and he had probably been attached to the office so that he could sign papers. But perhaps he was a decent sort of fellow. Schlump determined to wait till eight o'clock and then telephone the corporal. He knew that at this moment the corporal would be alone in the office, and he also determined not to tell him where he was calling from.

A little after eight he called up.

"Listen," said the corporal, harshly. "You know what you've started and what you're up against."

Schlump kept quiet. The corporal continued:

"Because you're only a boy, I didn't want to report you. Report at once to the lieutenant who saw the thing happen. And then come to me and apologize."

A great joy welled up in Schlump. He knew that he had won.

He ran back, still cautiously, for he did not trust

the corporal, and reported to the lieutenant. The latter was a sensible man. He made him sit down and put all sorts of questions to him: about his parents, his age, everything. Then he gave him a lecture, told him what his behavior meant and what the consequences could have been, and advised him to go to the corporal and offer his apologies. Schlump thanked him deeply and went over to the office. The moment he saw him the corporal flamed up. He roared at him, swore, cursed, called him an idiot, a criminal, a pickpocket, a horse-thief, and every name current in the German army. During all this time Schlump stood stiffly at attention: till at last the corporal hissed at him, "Get out of this place!"

Schlump went home like a man who has been pardoned on the scaffold. He thought of his mother and breathed again.

The Q.M.C. sergeant went with Schlump through the village to examine and note down all available quarters. A few days later the Q.M.C. detachment arrived with its wagons. The men had leather pants, new sheepskins, and new boots. Schlump was astonished to see them so well fitted up, and he asked one of them where they got all the new things.

"Surest thing," he laughed. "You don't think we're going to take nothing but old supplies with all those new ones lying around?"

They had also picked up a carbine, as ornament, and hung it on the wagon: likewise they wore long

swords and ringing spurs. They unhitched their horses and stabled them; then they turned into their quarters and slept until the morning. The next morning—they had no duty all that day—a Q.M.C. soldier, all excited and angry, came to Schlump in the office and shouted at the top of his voice:

"Say, what's the idea of giving me those quarters? What kind of life do you think we've been living? We've got to get some sleep. And I can't sleep on a straw sack: I've got to have a decent bed."

Schlump passed the blame on to the Q.M.C. sergeant, but he promised the man better quarters.

After him the Q.M.C. lieutenant came limping along, leaning on a cane, and frowning sternly. He was a very young man, a scientific agriculturist by profession. He brought with him the second Q.M.C. sergeant, a corporal, and two clerks. The lieutenant took possession of the Occupation office by sitting down on a chair in the middle of the room, resting his hands on his cane, and questioning Schlump loudly and pompously about everything: about the duties and tasks of the office, about the number of people in its area, about the public officials, and about the feeling among the French. Then he groaned, limped out of the room, and clenched his teeth. From the door he ordered the second sergeant, the corporal, and the clerks to put everything in order, so that business would go on as usual after Schlump was gone. As to the service outside, the lieutenant was going to have the Q.M.C. troops look after that themselves.

Schlump was now looked after by the Q.M.C. detachment. Since the Q.M.C. drivers lived on their own, in their quarters, they got their feed in kind from the company supplies. Schlump also obtained his supplies there, and in this wise he got so much meat, *Wurst,* coffee, and sugar that he became quite proud. Every day he went for his supplies and sat for a while among the drivers. At first they were in a pretty lively mood. They talked about their experiences, for they had been through a great deal. They came from the Loretto heights, where things had been pretty terrible. The French had sent their black soldiers up. And these devils had come skipping down the Loretto heights, their eyes glittering and knives between their jaws, and they'd have cut every throat in the regiment if the artillery hadn't come in between. Schlump listened attentively and respectfully to the drivers. The enemy's fire was terrific; the crack Guard suffered heavily, but of the green Chasseurs not a single one returned. The dead sat there, below the embankment, crowds of them; when somebody touched them they fell apart. They had been killed during the advance. And in spite of all this the French had not been able to move forward.

And the Q.M.C. soldiers gave Schlump the once-over and then looked indifferently past him, shook their heads, and took the pipes out of their mouths: "Yes, sir!" And Schlump asked quietly what their losses had been.

"They shot the lieutenant's horse in the leg—shot

it away, and the lieutenant fell off and tore up his behind on the barbed wire."

Schlump could not help laughing.

But the Q.M.C. men looked at him angrily and spat, and said they thought that bad enough. The lieutenant might just as easily have been killed.

Schlump went thoughtfully home and did not believe a thing they said, though they had not lied.

Schlump had not believed a word the Q.M.C. soldiers told him. But their stories made him thoughtful just the same. He knew that the trenches lay before him and that soon he would have to get out of Loffrande. He felt as though he had to say farewell to his home a second time.

Christmas had come. The rain fell, and the wind clashed the naked branches against each other. His mother had sent him a package. He unpacked the little gifts lovingly and laid them out in front of him. On every gift his mother had laid little twigs of fir, and the scent of them, mingling with the smell of the cakes which he unpacked, wrapped his soul around and carried him home. He was looking through the keyhole, and he could see his mother smiling as she lighted up the Christmas tree, and his impatience increased. His father sat near by, still working, for he had to deliver a suit that evening. And the hot steam of the press iron was carried to his nostrils. They had just come back from Mass, stamping through the

narrow streets; and in between the summits of the houses, which leaned their heads together as if they were confiding to each other, the snow fell softly, with a fine, light, rushing sound.

Schlump looked up. Twilight was falling outside and a thin rain whispered down. His mother had sent him some cookies, a pair of woolen socks, and everything else that might occur to a thoughtful mother's heart. And she had also put in a book, with little poems about spring and love and autumn, and about longing—just the thing he had been wanting. He left his room and went over to the French folk, who seemed to know nothing about Christmas Eve. Little Hélène sat at the table in the corner, reading in an old, tattered picture-book. He sat down by her, and she asked him at once to tell her a story, as he had done once before. He was alone with her in the room: only the old clock ticked in rhythm with his story.

But Schlump was thinking of his mother. Once, in the twilight hour, he used to sit on her lap; she used to tell him stories which he knew as well and believed as firmly as if he had lived through them.

"And now listen: I'm going to tell you the story of poor Gil.

"There was once a poor little tailor's apprentice whose name was Gil. He had a harsh master who used to hit him with his yardstick when he didn't make the stitches close enough, and nip him with the shears when he didn't make the seam close enough to the edge, and stick the needle into him whenever he looked

out of the window. And then his master's wife! She couldn't bear the sight of him, just because he wanted to eat now and again until he was quite satisfied. Whenever he took a spoonful of soup from the plate she fixed two angry eyes on him. Once he took a piece of dry bread with the soup, because the soup was so thin, and when he happened to cut too deep into the loaf, the old woman snarled, 'Here! Eat *all* of it!' On top of all this he had to work late into the night, sewing on buttons, and he had to get up as soon as the cock crowed in the early morning to clean the floors and carry the ashes out and bring up the coals. But his master became harsher and harsher, and his mistress meaner and meaner, till he became so hungry that he couldn't stand it any more, and then he ran away.

"But as he had no parents, poor Gil didn't know where to run. He thought of going to the big city, because he felt he could find food there. For the last time he went through the narrow streets, with their pointed roofs, and greeted the high gables which leaned their foreheads together above him as if they were consulting about what would happen to poor Gil. He went out of the town, right through the fields, toward the big city. He could see it from afar, for a great smoke-cloud hung over the many high chimneys. First he came to wonderful wide streets with marvelous gardens on either side and glorious trees and flowers in blossom. But from behind these gardens, among the trees, noble houses peered out with big

windows. Then he came to another quarter of the town. There he saw gigantic black houses, long, high, with no flowers blooming before them. Many children with running noses played at the corners, and motor trucks went rushing by and disappeared through big wide gates behind which stood other high, gloomy houses. Feeling a little frightened, Gil went in through one of the gates.

"From behind the filthy windows of one of the rear houses came the ringing, beating tumult of machines, and he heard the belts smacking against the broad rims of the busy wheels.

"He asked for work and got it at once. All day long he had to sit at an enormous machine in front of a clock which had only one hand, and the hand swung up and down. On the clock face there was one single red line. Whenever the hand passed over the line, Gil was supposed to press a button to let the furnace man know that danger was approaching. But the hand of the clock never passed over the red line, and all day long Gil sat there and stared stupidly at the trembling hand. The foreman had given him a key and a number, and every morning he had to stick the key into a big iron box on top of which there was a real clock. There were many numbers on the box, and every worker had to stick his key into his own number, so that the clock could know who had come late and who had come on time. And on payday there was an envelope under the number, with wages. Gil began to feel that he had become a number himself, or a part of

the machine in front of which he had to sit all day long.

"As he received very little pay, he began to look for another job. He became the furnace man's assistant. And now he got the same pay as the others, but he had to stand all day long in front of an oven and bring up the coal and cart away the glowing ashes. And sometimes the stoker opened the gigantic door of the furnace and made Gil help him with the tremendous rake. They pulled out the blazing slag from underneath and had to be careful not to get burned. One day the stoker stumbled and fell to the ground, and the white-hot slag sprang out on to his breast and his limbs, making him scream horribly. Gil drew him out, but he was already terribly burned. An ambulance came from the hospital and took him away. Then Gil became first stoker, but he kept thinking of the fate of his predecessor who had died in the hospital, and he began to look for another job.

"He found work in the mines, but there it was even worse. He had to pull the heavy sleds along and keep his eyes open so as not to bang his head against the low roof or get run over. Then he was promoted to foreman and he had to work hard, half stripped, for it was fearfully hot down there, and on his knees; he had to cut out the coal, and sometimes he thought the bad air would choke him. And when he could not break off enough coal, the chief foreman would come and scold him angrily. In the morning they came up into the daylight and stepped into a train which car-

ried them, wordless, home again. Gil slept in a miserable room with another worker whom he did not know at all; and when they worked during the night two other men slept in their beds. But one night, while Gil was working in his place, he heard a suspicious banging and crackling—and after that one big clap of thunder.

"When Gil came to again, he was lying in a hospital near many of his buddies. The white-clad Sisters attended to him and spoke to him softly and in friendly tones. He did not know what had happened to him, but the Sister told him that he had been lying there unconscious for three days. Gil felt a terrible pain in his breast as often as he drew breath, and was so weak that he could not even lift his arm. But he was young and improved daily.

"At last they released him from the hospital. For a month they continued to help him and he did not need to work. He went strolling in the big parks and thought of his future. When the month came to an end, and he found himself with just six cents in his pocket, he made up his mind to go to a fortune-teller and have her read the cards for him so that he might know what the future held in store. If things were not going to improve he would . . . but he refused to think. He gave the card-reader his last six cents. In her hands, which looked like two big spiders, lay a dirty pack of cards. Gil had to cut; then she shuffled the cards with her spider fingers, muttered to herself, and said at last, 'Your happiness is on the way. You will

meet it as soon as you step out of the house. Hold fast to it and don't let it get away from you.'

"Disappointed, Gil went out and regretted the six cents he had given the old witch. And as he turned the corner, deep in thought, he ran into somebody so violently that he suddenly sat down. And when he looked up, in a daze, he saw somebody sitting opposite him—and it was a young, pretty girl, with blue eyes. And she looked at him with such friendliness that Gil thought to himself, 'This is my happiness: I must hold fast.' He helped her quickly to her feet, and as she didn't seem at all angry, he asked her if he might walk with her some of the way.

"And Gil did not let go of his happiness. She got a job for him as packer in a big mail-order house. For she was a seamstress and had many fine acquaintances, among whom it was easy for her to find something. Saturdays they went out walking, and Gil was happy. He was pleased when he saw her wearing a new dress, and sometimes he took a pencil and sketched another dress for her and told her what colors to use. She was astonished by the good taste he showed, and being an industrious kind of girl who had saved up some money, she persuaded him to go to the tailoring school, so that later on they might be able to open a business together.

"And that is exactly what happened. Gil became a ladies' master tailor. And when the fine ladies came, he sketched out wonderful dresses for them, made the complete patterns, and added the colors, so that his

customers were enthusiastic about him. And his wife cut out the dresses and looked after the sewing and after the girls and apprentices.

"And they lived happily ever after."

Little Hélène slid off Schlump's lap. Monsieur Doby opened the door and came in, and the thunder of the cannons rolled over, louder than ever before, from the distant front.

The Q.M.C. men made Schlump angry. They did very little work: in the morning a couple of them would plow in the fields; then they would stand leaning insolently against the door-posts, looking as if they had conquered the entire country.

Once the Q.M.C. sergeant asked him what would happen when he left Loffrande.

"The trenches," answered Schlump.

"Is that so?" the sergeant said. "I have a couple of cousins. They've got high school certificates, too—have to serve only one year—and they volunteered, just like you. But they didn't go into the infantry, and they won't go to the trenches either. One of them is in the heavy artillery and the other in the cavalry. Do you know who goes to the trenches? Idiots—or fellows who got into trouble."

Schlump received this silently. He had learned from his experience with the corporal to keep his tongue between his teeth.

But he did not want to be counted among the idiots. He did not want to be looked down on, and now he

was sorry that he had not volunteered for the artillery. He consoled himself: "That's for the men with flat feet; when a fellow is built right and can march properly, they put him in the infantry."

And so Schlump was angry. It was New Year's Eve, and he wanted to have a good time for once. He called for Carolouis, and they went over to Fourbevilles. For months a number of drivers from some artillery regiment had been taking it easy there. All they had to do was to move munition supplies now and again, and they picked out the darkest nights. Carolouis, too, had something to worry him. He told Schlump about his Gretel, at home, by whom he had had a child. But there were French prisoners in the village who had been helping at the harvest, and he didn't trust his Gretel. "If that bitch gets a kid from one of them Frogs, I'll get me another woman. There'll be lots of them after the war." They went into the artillery canteen, sat down, and ordered beer. Soon the canteen was filled with artillerymen, and filled, too, with clouds of smoke, so that it was almost impossible for the men to see each other. Their spirits mounted by degrees; they became loud and merry, and some were already quarreling over a card game. Schlump remained quiet and was glad that the men would start fighting among themselves. About ten o'clock the beer gave out, and now they began to drink cognac out of beer glasses. Before long, chairs and tables had been thrown down, and the top sergeant lay on the floor, snoring. He was blind drunk. About

midnight the men stormed out of the place; a tremendous cannonade came rolling southward; the men stumbled over to their quarters, brought out their carbines, and shot into the air like lunatics. Then they all went back to the canteen.

Schlump couldn't quite make out what they were doing in the canteen. In any case, dawn was already coming up when they went back to quarters. In between a light snow had fallen, and a thin sheet, white as spring blossom, lay on the fields. Carolouis looked at the white linen and was quite sure that this was a bed. He stood still suddenly and began to undress—down to his shirt. Schlump stood by and watched him, astonished. Then he understood that Carolouis was going to bed, and he too lay down near by, but without undressing. And the two comrades slept peacefully side by side and Carolouis snored and dreamed of his Gretel, whom he couldn't trust.

Near the road splashed a little brook. Schlump was suddenly wide awake, listening. He heard a curious ringing and gurgling at his ear and sat up and was suddenly quite sober. Carolouis still lay there. The two of them had been sliding over, head first, into the water. Schlump drew his friend away and tried to wake him, but it was impossible. So he covered him with his clothes and ran off to the village. He wanted to find a pushcart to bring Carolouis home. Meanwhile it had become quite light, and people were moving about everywhere. At last he managed to get a baby carriage from Monsieur Doby. And since that was the

best he could do and he would not leave his friend in the lurch, he had to be content with it. He took a quilt along and went back.

Carolouis was still snoring. Schlump put the clothes at the bottom of the baby carriage and then, with infinite labor, lifted Carolouis in and covered him with the quilt. Here and there a hairy limb dangled out, with boots stuck over it, for Schlump had not been able to find the socks.

Thus the two of them entered Loffrande, greeted gayly by the women, who were just then going to their work in the barns. But it was Monsieur Doby who laughed longest and loudest when he saw this curious team approaching.

Lonely as a ghost Schlump wandered over the snow-covered soil of France. The thin, blue-glistening mantle lay even over all the meadows, but on the plowed fields it had accumulated in the furrows, so that the dark-brown lumpy clods looked out silently and seriously. There had been a light frost. The wide ruts which the carts had left the day before in the soft clay ran swiftly before the wanderer and shone faintly in the light of the weak sun which peeped down from the misty sky. Schlump let his gun lie square across his shoulders and shoved his helmet back on his head. He was no longer used to marching and to the heavy pack. He dragged his heavy boots along, and the hard iron nails rang on the frozen ground. He wandered through the dirty villages and

was again astonished by the ugly houses. The Frenchmen standing in the doors, with their hands in their wide trousers, looked at him hostilely, for they did not know him.

The day before the telephone had rung and he had been ordered to proceed to Carvin. It was all like a dream to him. The major had come over from Occupation headquarters, had praised him in front of everybody and even held him up as a model to the lieutenant. Schlump was rather proud. But it didn't do him much good, for in the morning he had to make up his pack and leave. Estelle came over from her godmother's house and helped him roll up his overcoat and strap the cover of his pack. Big tears rolled down her cheeks and dropped on to his mess-kit.

Schlump saw clearly what was in store for him. But he felt as though he had been living in this place a hundred years. A strange mood came over him. He no longer knew whether all these things which were now behind him had really happened. He was neither sad nor happy. He was only amazed and a trifle dazed. Then he had hitched his pack on, drawn the belt with its cartridge pouch round him, and set his helmet on his head. And Estelle had stepped back two paces and looked at him, astonished and estranged. He went across to the inn. Little Hélène was playing with her picture-book. He shook hands with all of them. Madame Doby cried, and Monsieur Doby looked serious; he took his pipe out of his mouth, shook

hands with him significantly, and said, "Courage!" Estelle had disappeared.

Toward evening Schlump reached Carvin and reported to the sergeant. The sergeant looked at him with a mixture of indifference and contempt and assigned him to a squad.

BOOK TWO

IT HAD been dark for a long time. The stars twinkled and sparkled and foretold an ice-cold night. Schlump had found quarters at last. The fifth squad was housed in a cellar to which a low door led directly from the street. Schlump went down the steps. A revolting stink of men, leather, and damp moss met him, and the smoke curling out of the oven stung his eyes. The soldiers were mostly lying on the straw, asleep, but a few sat near a candle and played cards or wrote letters or ate hungrily from a package sent them by sweetheart or mother. One man was cleaning his clothes and another looking for lice. Schlump found a corner for himself, threw down his pack, unstrapped his belt, and lay down. One man asked him what he was doing there, but the rest paid no attention to him. Schlump looked around him. The back door of the cellar gave on the yard, but like all doors in France it closed badly, and an icy draft came through continuously. The little stove glowed with the wood fire, and the pipe, leading through a hole in the wall, glowed too. But the hole was much too big, so that Schlump could look through and see the stars twinkling in the sky.

And so tomorrow morning he had to take up his

duties again. Schlump inspected his things. His boots had not picked up any dirt on the frozen road, and his cartridge belt still shone, for Estelle had lovingly polished the leather work. But his arms were rusty, and the iron on his heels was loose. He began to eat. He had brought enough bread and butter and canned meat with him from Loffrande. Then he lay down and slept as only youth can sleep.

Long, long before sunrise, while the stars were still twinkling in full glory, the guard came to wake them. Schlump volunteered to bring the coffee—he wanted to establish himself on good terms with his new comrades. They put eight mess-kits into his hand. One of the men from the fourth squad, which was quartered near by, showed him the way. They crawled through twenty fences and climbed over as many hedges and walls, for the narrow path had been laid by the soldiers and led behind the sober little dwellings and through the narrow yards across an infinitude of obstacles. The other squads were already there, for they had not as far to go. On the way back they went with the full mess-kits along the streets in front of the houses. The way was longer, but easier. The coffee was still boiling-hot, and the steam scalded his fingers. Then an icy blast came down and cut into his flesh till he thought his nails would burst out of his finger tips. The other man told him, "You ought to wrap puttees round your hands."

Later came drill. Schlump did not enjoy it any more. He thought it was a little below his dignity still

to be playing the recruit; his buddies made the impression of green youngsters on him, though most of them were two years older than he.

They were kept hard at close order drill and they marched and ran until they steamed. Then they practiced open order drill and lay down in the snow and cooled their knees on the frozen earth and practiced sighting and firing. In the afternoon they went into an empty factory for arms drill. For hours at a stretch they practiced loading and locking. Schlump worked like a convict, a sour look on his face; the whole business was loathsome to him. He thought back to Loffrande and to the Q.M.C. troops and he remembered what they thought about the infantry. Then he noticed the factory, and he was astonished at the emptiness and bleakness of it: even part of the floors had been removed. And then they went back to quarters.

The soldiers were given neither wood nor coal; so there was only one thing left them if they were not to freeze to death—to steal. But a special and severe battalion order forbade the stealing of fuel. Schlump went along, foraging. There were three of them, one with a pick, the other two with spades. They stole over to the factory where they had been drilling in the afternoon, crawled in through the cellar window—for the door was locked—and climbed upstairs by a ladder. This was not a simple business, for the ladder had only three shaky rungs. Upstairs the second and seventh squads were already hacking at the floor. Schlump set to work. "You have to notice where the

holes are," he thought, "or one of these days you'll break every bone in your body."

A pair of unfamiliar faces suddenly shot up from the cellar hole. The men belonged to another regiment. "Why don't you bastards go and steal in your own barracks?" shouted one of the recruits, and lifted up his spade. The two soldiers swore back: "Shut your damned trap," but they disappeared.

When they had accumulated enough wood they threw it down into the cellar. Then every man loaded up with as much as he could carry and they ran back to quarters—each one by a different path. There one man set to work splitting the planks and another man fed the oven till it glowed again.

And thus it was every day.

At the end of a fortnight the company was to proceed to L. and dig trenches there, and Schlump was happy in the prospect; for after all it was better than this eternal exercising and drilling. And when the fortnight ended, they actually did march off. The march was beautiful. The sun shone and lit a thousand tiny diamonds on the frozen ground. The air was clear and ice-cold. They passed by rusted barbed-wire entanglements, along a great military cemetery where hundreds of men who had been at the front in 1914 were now laid to rest. They marched by dilapidated and bombarded houses, up the hill, and into L. There they were led to their new quarters—a stable. On the floor below were the horses, sheltered from wind and

cold: the upstairs, where they used to dry the hay, was assigned to the recruits. The wind sang through the room, for the walls had crumbled away, leaving big openings. Of the roof, nothing was left but the rafters, which stood up bleak and naked, so that from a distance the stable looked like a picked herring. The few sheltered places were soon occupied, and the men fought for the corners under the rafters. Schlump landed in a place between two Polacks who had been quartered there from before, and he could not make out a word of their gabble, which sounded to him like the rattle of machine-guns. The men installed themselves as best they could, and tried to rest up before the next march. Then they had to go for coffee. Before going, Schlump hid the butter which was left over from Loffrande, for the Polacks were as thievish as magpies.

Eight o'clock that evening they fell in again. They carried side-arms, cartridges, and spades, but no overcoats or packs. They marched out to the village, which now consisted of nothing more than a couple of forlorn little houses—but these at least had roofs on them. Hussars stood leaning in the doorways of the houses, just as insolent as the Q.M.C. troops in Loffrande. Schlump looked at them in amazement, for he just could not imagine of what possible use they could be in the war. As far as he could make out they were needed only for parades, when the Kaiser was around.

In front marched the corporals and lance-corporals.

A sergeant led the company. During the first quarter of an hour they were permitted to sing. One of the lance-corporals, who knew a whole raft of songs, sang the verses, and the company responded with the chorus.

They had just come to the last stanza:

A year had passed, and bright and fair
The silver moon shone down again;
And once again I lingered there
And dreamed of her and longed in vain:
And in the silver light
A gravestone glistened white:
"A mother and a child lie underneath this stone:
Oh, pray for those who died abandoned and alone."

With that they came to a peasant hut surrounded by low bushes. The company became silent, and all that was heard was the steady rhythm of footsteps, the clank of the spades against the side-arms and of the water-flasks against the picks.

Then something hissed up into the air, way up, above the peasant hut—something that flashed like a fierce red tongue—and it burst with a short, sharp, ringing sound: *zh-zh-inn!*

"Shrapnel," said the lance-corporal. And the recruits were amazed. They had never heard or seen anything like it before. They went on, silently. Schlump had a pain in his ankle. The supply clerk had given him a new pair of boots—but supplies had been low, and Schlump had to take whatever he found.

The new boots rubbed the skin of his ankle till it bled, and every step was agony.

At last the command came to halt. The sound of the cannons was not the same as in Loffrande. They did not boom as often over here, but when they did it was with a mean, cruel, brutal sound. They were still two or three hours' march from the front, one of the soldiers said. They stood in the center of the bald landscape and saw only the night, in which a faint snow gleamed. Here they had to dig. An engineering squad had been there before them and had marked out the lines, and now the recruits set to work. One meter's length of trench was assigned to each man, and he had to dig two meters down and two meters across. The ground was frozen hard, and under the thin layer of soil was a stratum of hard limestone. It was terrific work. The men slaved through the whole night. Schlump perspired like a peasant in the dog days, but he could not keep pace with the Polacks. For they were miners from Westphalia and Upper Silesia and they had the knack of digging and shoveling. They swore like bargees and seemed ready every minute to knock him down because the sods rolled over from his plot to theirs. Schlump worked with the strength of desperation. Once a shell exploded near them, and the fragments hissed through the air like a thousand wild cats and wailed and howled like lost souls. The recruits threw themselves down on their stomachs, but Schlump worked on unceasingly;

he wanted to use every moment in order to catch up with the others.

The others were finished, and they rested their hands on their spades and their chins on their hands, but Schlump worked on. The work went slower and slower. He could not go on. Slowly his limbs became rigid with the strain and the cold. The corporal passed by and bawled him out, but it did no good. He could not dig another spadeful—not if they shot him.

Dawn began to glimmer in the east. The sergeant commanded, "Shoulder arms! Fall in!" and they set out on the return march.

Then a new torture began. His ankle was swollen, and with every step he felt as though he were being flayed alive. He groaned and set his teeth: the road stretched on forever.

But everything must come to an end, and at last they came to the village. Dog-tired, they wrapped themselves in their blankets, laid their overcoats across their hips and shoulders, and fell asleep. In the early morning, before sunrise, it was ice-cold. They had some old petroleum cans, and they lit small fires in these, but the heat died out a few inches from the cans.

At eight o'clock in the morning Schlump woke up. He tried to stand up, but it was no use. His legs were either broken or lamed—he could not make out which. At last, with indescribable pain, he managed to get himself erect. He was stiff with the cold. But when he looked around him he was even more amazed. He had

been lying near a huge hole through which he might have fallen on to the stable floor below. Had he moved an inch, he would have been lying down there. The straw on which he had been lying was blackened by the heat of the stove, and he was astonished that he had not been burned.

The Polacks had already risen and had made a fire in the other can. Schlump went over and sat down among them. He was quite dazed, for he did not know whether he was half frozen or half burned.

Then they were mustered for the roll call.

The roll call was over. Schlump sat near the barrel and cut pieces out of his underwear, one piece from each trouser-leg. Then he unscrewed the barrel of his rifle and with it jammed the rags down into his boots, so as to cover his ankles, which still hurt him at every step. Then he smoked a cigarette and warmed his fingers. Near him sat one of the musicians, a handsome fellow, slender, strongly built, and with fine features. He seemed to be sunk in care. He stared dully in front of him, and the cigarette which Schlump had given him fell out of his fingers, though he had only puffed it once. Schlump asked him how he came to be here. "We have to go along and dig too," he answered. He was no longer a recruit, for he already had the Iron Cross: he had been in the regular army before the war, for he carried round his shoulder the marksman's cord, which used to be handed out only in peace times. Schlump asked him how long he had

been a soldier. "I was just in my second year when the war broke out, buddy." After a pause he went on, "Until nine months ago I was at the front. Then they put me in the band: I played the cornet. My real instrument is the 'cello. But I asked to be sent to the front again."

"Why?" asked Schlump. "You don't need to train any more." The man interested him; he used his words so carefully, though he had been in the army for four years and was now placed among the recruits—and among Polacks at that. Something wasn't right.

"You look strangely at me, comrade," the cornetist said. "But I don't feel like laughing. Listen to me, comrade. You look like a sensible fellow, the kind of man I can open my heart to. Have you time?"

"Till they call me," Schlump said.

"Then listen." And he began to speak, and Schlump had the feeling that the man was confessing himself, for he spoke at much length and sometimes became confused, and his eyes were wide open, as though he were reading from the book of his past.

"I told you that I was in the regular army when the war broke out. We were sent to the front; I was with the troops before Paris; I took part in the retreat; wherever anything happened I was there; I was the first man in my regiment to get the Iron Cross, and in those days the Iron Cross meant something. I was the first one, too, to go on leave. That was around Easter time, 1915. And that's when my miseries began.

Comrade, I'll tell you everything. I returned to my home. I was proud, you can believe me—the first man to come on leave from the front. I was invited everywhere. And wherever I came they dined me and wined me till I was half dead.

"All right. One day I was invited to a birthday party, near where we lived—about half an hour's distance on the trolley car. I came in, greeted the folks, and there was a girl seated at the table. Comrade, you've never seen anything like that girl in all your life. You're laughing. Don't think I'm in love—that's all past. But if you want to know how beautiful she was, I'll tell you something. I asked the people who she was and why she was dressed in black. 'What?' they asked. 'Don't you know the beautiful Lieselott? She's famous everywhere for her beauty.' Why was she in mourning? 'Her brother was killed at the front. He volunteered for front line service, and some say he went out to find death because he himself was in love with his sister. But she's a decent girl, too decent; she doesn't look at any one, no matter how many burn their wings. Watch yourself.' That's the way people spoke about her; so you can believe me that she was beautiful.

"I watched her during the dancing. Oh, yes, she danced. Not often, of course, because of her brother's death. But, comrade, when she danced with me it was as though I could hear an unearthly music. Her body swayed to the dance, so that I seemed to hear a marvelous, joyous allegro, and after it a tender, sacred

andante. She had a slim figure, but her body was strong. And her mouth! Glowing red—and such lovely lines! Such lines as might have shaped the lips of Mozart when he was about to begin conducting a graceful minuet: and, comrade, her nostrils fluttered faintly, like a butterfly making ready to fly from the apple-blossom where it has been resting. Everything else melted into a mist, and I saw only her. I can't remember what I said and what I did that evening. I saw her, and only her, no matter where I looked. It was as though everything had become transparent, as though I could look through the people who stood in front of her, and as though I could look even through myself when I had my back turned to her. Comrade—I was bewitched.

"She let me see her home. And think of it! I told her everything I felt. And she wasn't angry with me, comrade. I kissed her."

Suddenly he caught Schlump by the arm and shook him. "Comrade, can you understand an experience like that? Have you ever loved that way?" He went on again, softly, "No, such a thing can happen only once in this world. You can't understand it." The cornetist was silent for a long time.

"I'll make it short," he said. "She was kind to me. I had only eight days' leave. I spoke with her father. Everything was like a dream—and on the day before my return, she became my war bride.

"Her father had rented a small apartment for us, way up under the roof. I can't remember who was

there, at the wedding: I think only our parents. I had eyes only for her.

"Then they all left.

"And the next morning I had to return to the front."

The cornetist spoke no more. He poked the ashes with a piece of wood and stared dumbly into the glow.

A corporal entered and gave the order to fall in, and Schlump took his rifle and went out. They practiced falling flat and jumping up, and the sergeant looked for the dirtiest places to make them do it in.

In the evening the cornetist came again, and Schlump sat down by him. The cornetist continued: "Early next morning, comrade, I said good-by to her. And you can imagine the mood I was in. Till that time I had not been afraid of death. I had always exposed myself carelessly to danger, and undertaken the craziest missions. But now! I wanted to live, I didn't want to lose my happiness—and I trembled whenever I thought of it. I went back to the front. And think of it, my captain was transferred to the rear, to train recruits, and he wanted to take me along for the band. And how happy I was to go with him! No more trenches! I was sure now of seeing my wife again.

"We wrote each other. Every day. I could hardly bear the separation. I kept on thinking and thinking how I could get home again. I thought up the wildest, craziest plans. But I had to wait.

"And then I noticed that her letters were becoming

less frequent. And there was a change in the way she wrote, too. Her letters sounded so muddled. I felt it clearly; I wasn't deceiving myself. I grew hot and cold and tormented myself thinking what it might be. And then I imagined that we were going to have a child, and I wrote to her even more tenderly than before.

"When Christmas came round I had a stroke of good luck. I was able to go home! My captain had a lot of stuff that he picked up at the front, and he wanted to send it home to his wife as a present. I was to go along, because the orderly couldn't drag all of it: besides, he didn't know those parts, and I happened to come from the same city as the captain. We left. I reached my home and flew up the stairs. I rang. She opened the door; then she screamed and swayed as if about to fall. I caught her in my arms, I carried her in and kissed her.

"Then she came to and pulled away from me and ran into the next room and bolted the door after her. I heard her sobbing loudly. And I was speechless with bewilderment.

"I knocked at the door and she drew back the bolt. I went in and wanted to calm her. Then I asked her what all this meant. And at last she began to tell me —in fits and starts. At last her eyes became dry, and she stared in front of her and spoke. She spoke in a hard, sensible, dry voice, and a bit defiantly, as if she were on the witness stand. And, comrade, this is what she told me.

"She was invited again to the house where she first met me. And there, again, a soldier came in, just as before, but this time it was an aviation lieutenant. And he looked so much like me that she became terrified. And he fell under her spell just as I had done, could not take his eyes off her, and followed her everywhere. Everything happened exactly the same as on the evening when we met. He said certain words to her, and she allowed him to see her home, and—comrade, the rest you can imagine for yourself.

"I tottered out of the room, and sat down at the table, and remained sitting there the whole night through. The whole night. In the morning I even slept a little. When I awoke she was standing in the doorway, in the dress she had on the night before; she too had probably not slept. She stood at the door and held on to the door-post with both hands. She looked at me out of her big, sorrowful eyes, steadfastly. Steadfastly, and so submissively, as if she were asking me to strike her dead.

"Comrade—that was a hard battle I fought with myself. We are weak, all of us. I wanted to kill her at first—and then I forgave her.

"She attended me, she obeyed me, she listened to me, like a dog. I could have trampled her with my feet, and she wouldn't have complained."

Suddenly the cornetist stood up, his eyes rolling wildly; with both hands he seized Schlump by the shoulders and screamed out so that the Polacks came

running up: "Comrade! Three days later she threw herself into the river."

And then the cornetist laughed—laughed loudly, horribly. He sat down again, and spoke very softly: "I reported back to the sergeant, and told him I wanted to go to the front, and tomorrow I shall be sent up"—he spoke very softly—"and I shall never come back: that much I promise you."

That night they all went out again to dig, and the musician went along. The lance-corporal again led the singing, and the company took up the chorus:

> Three lilies, oh, three lilies,
> I planted on his grave;
> A haughty horseman came that way,
> Trampled those lilies brave.

The enemy had known for some time that the soldiers came out at night to dig there. They trained heavy guns on the spot, and this time there were casualties: two men wounded and one man killed. The man who was killed was the cornetist.

The recruits went out digging eight nights in succession, and then they were transferred: not to Carvin, however, but back to Mons-en-P. There the drill began all over again. They skirmished, they learned to take obstacles, they practiced enfilading trenches with hand-grenades, they ran across muddy meadows and rolled in the mud. Often they came back looking like pigs, covered with filth from head to foot. Some-

times they got as far as the slopes of Loffrande, and Schlump looked longingly at the houses whose inhabitants he knew so well. He felt like a dethroned king and was ashamed to go marching through the village as a recruit; he was happy when no one recognized him among all the faces. They had hardly a moment of free time, for they had to keep their things clean, and every day there was inspection, this time mess-kits, water-bottles, and packs; the second time spades, arms, and cartridge belt; the third time shoes, boots, and overcoats.

Once, during a rare interval of freedom, he stood before the door of the Occupation office. The girls of Loffrande came by, and went into the office to get their passes stamped. They passed him without recognizing him. As they came out he addressed them. There were three of them, Marie, Jeanne, and Estelle. Estelle cried out, blushed, and started with joy; then she became silent and sorrowful again. The other two laughed and passed on. But he could not exchange more than a couple of words with Estelle. She left him sadly, and her eyes were wet.

At last they went off to the front. In the morning they mustered in the market place, and the sergeant passed along the ranks, first alone and then with the captain. The band took its place at the head of the column, and they wheeled through the market place and marched out toward the west. The sergeant stood in the middle of the market place, leaning against a post to which the peasants used to tie their pigs and

calves in peacetime, and he looked thoughtfully at the long column of recruits leaving for the front. Not the first and not the last. How many had he not seen leaving? And how many of them still lived? Perhaps he was wondering where so many young men came from—and these not the last—and all of them leaving so joyously for the front. Perhaps he was wondering how he had come to be spared.

Schlump marched along with the rest. He could still see the peculiar expression on the sergeant's face, and a strange, uncomfortable feeling came over him. The captain rode along part of the way; then he turned back and the music turned back with him. The recruits marched on, every company led by a sergeant; then the companies split, and each one was assigned to a different regiment.

It was a long march. And when the march was over they waited in front of regimental headquarters, and it was a long wait. At last a clerk came out of the big building and sent a detail off to each battalion. Then they had to wait in front of battalion headquarters. They waited a long time, till finally a clerk came out and distributed them among the companies. The seventh company was quartered in what had once been a big bakery, an hour's distance from Carvin. They waited a long time in front of company headquarters. After a long, long wait the sergeant came out and looked the replacements over from head to foot. In front of Schlump he stopped—Schlump attracted his attention because his clothes were so worn. The

sergeant touched him on the chest and asked him the reason. Schlump told him that it was a long time since he had been transferred and that was why his clothes were no longer new. The sergeant said, "Is that so? You got transferred and didn't get yourself a new outfit? What a Goddam fool you must be!" Then he turned round and left the recruits standing. After a long wait the company clerk came out and said, "The company is just being relieved. You boys'll go along to the third line, where you'll be in reserve."

Toward ten o'clock in the evening they went out to take up their positions. They marched a long way on the broad road leading to Aubines. Their emergency rations—a sandbag with hard black bread and iron biscuits—and their steel helmets were new to them, for as recruits they had worn only the leather helmet. They also had blisters on their feet from the ten-hour march. The supply clerk led the detail. He was a Silesian, rough as a burr, but a decent soul. He told them about the position they were going to occupy. "They'll be glad to get these replacements," he said. "The company's too weak. One squad of eight men has to look after three or four outposts, and that's too much." At midnight they reached Aubines. It was a gloomy village, on the other side of a slope; the moon had not yet risen. They passed by a sentinel, who did not move. Here and there they saw lights glimmering from cracks in cellars. "That's the heavy artillery." Then they climbed up a railway embankment and over

into a dilapidated field path. They spoke very little now, and since it was quiet they tried to keep their spades from clanking against their side-arms. With the other hand they pulled the rifle strap tight, to prevent the trigger guard from rubbing against the shoulder. Then the moon rose and shone clearly on them. The men let their heads sink, and they marched in a doze. Schlump thought of many things that had happened since the day when he had entered the barracks. And then it occurred to him that he was going to find out all about the trenches, and his interest awoke and he looked keenly into the darkness in front of him. At one o'clock they reached Saint-Laurent. "Here's where the field artillery is located."

Paff! Paff! Paff! The cannons shot from behind them. It sounded as though something were bursting under high pressure. Then they heard the wailing of the shells, dying down into a hiss in the distance. Then an echo came from the other side, beating on their ears with a dull rhythm.

The supply clerk swore, "The Goddam fools! What the hell do they want to make trouble for just when we're passing? If they don't stop, the Frenchies'll start firing back sure as hell." They went through the shattered village. There was hardly a house with a roof on. On some of them it was still possible to read the signs, and the advertisements of a brand of cognac. Sometimes the front of the house had been torn away and its intestines hung out, and they could see into the rooms inside. They marched by. The moon shone

straight into one of the houses and illumined it with a strange light, cheerful and ghostly. On the wall hung a picture, with an inscription: *Hommage à mes parents!* A childish hand had written the words in big, big letters: *To my parents!* And the parents had been proud, and they had framed the lettering. Schlump thought they would surely be surprised if they could see their house again.

The soldiers had to cross an open square. In the center stood an iron pavilion where the band had used to play during the Fairs. "This is one Goddam corner," the supply clerk said. "The Frenchies have their guns just trained on it." They had stumbled into the center of the square, over the ruins of desolate houses, when, beyond the summit of the facing slope, they saw a red gleam and again the same bursting explosion, and after a few seconds they heard the hiss of a shell which buried itself with a howl in the frozen ground, about thirty paces in front of them. *Zh-zh-inn!* It was like the exploding of a locomotive, and Schlump was terrified by the mean sound of the fragments as they went wailing horribly through the air. "We were Goddam lucky not to be over there," one man said. There was a tightness in their chests as they went by the fresh shell-hole. "If another was to come now," thought Schlump, "you couldn't do anything—you're helpless."

They went across another flat field sown with duds and fragments of grenades and shrapnel. Then they came to a little wood. "This is the third line. There's a

big grave over there—eight thousand English in one hole: and further on three thousand Germans, they got killed in the big push in the autumn, when the English were already in Aubines." Schlump didn't believe the figures were right. "But there's lots of them buried there all right," he calculated. "And now the poor devils are all rotten and mildewed. And next year there'll be other fellows thinking like me, when we're lying under the ground."

Here the trenches began. They clambered down into the narrow passage; the sides of the trenches were held up by buttresses of woven branches, and the rain and sliding clay had brought the walls so close together that in some places they stuck fast with their packs. Then sometimes, above them, a path would be laid across the trench, or a railway track, so that they cracked their heads against it, or stuck fast with their rifles. In some places the trench had been heavily shelled, and deep holes yawned in front of them. Their progress was difficult, and they began to sweat, for they were not accustomed to this life yet.

"Here's the lieutenant's dugout," said the supply clerk. "Wait here." He went down. A neat little balustrade ran along the steps which went down, and above the entrance, which was almost comfortable, a roof had been built, adorned with wooden bars. The supply clerk did not appear again. After a while the lieutenant's orderly came out and led them off. Schlump was disappointed. He thought that the lieutenant himself should have come out and greeted them

with dignity and shaken hands with them cheerily as his new comrades. But this way! It was just as if the supply clerk had reported the arrival of a couple of sacks of beans.

They stumbled and pushed along for quite a distance through the narrow trenches which wound interminably forward, sometimes throwing off branches in the direction of the enemy. The night was quiet; only now and again the rattle of a machine gun came across to them. They passed by other dugouts—these were simply holes at the bottom of the trench, and if a smoking pipe had not been sticking out they would have fallen in. At every dugout the orderly detached two men and sent them down.

They passed a sentinel—an elderly guardsman. He turned and asked, "Replacements?"

"Yes."

"Thank God!"

At five in the morning Schlump went out on guard. He was dog-tired from the marching of the day before, and he stumbled along the trench and could not understand why it had to make a bend at every couple of steps, as though to get out of some one's way. He went patiently round the bends, looking for his post. Suddenly he stopped, stupefied. There, in front of him, in the uncertain morning twilight, stood Lemke, on the firing step of the trench. Lemke came from Brandenburg, and he had arrived in the trenches only yesterday, together with Schlump. He had red

hair, and his face was a mass of freckles. Lemke stood there quite alone, his face turned toward the enemy, his rifle at his side. From across the way a machine gun rattled at regular intervals: tak-tak-tak-tak . . . tak-tak-tak-tak . . . tak-tak-tak-tak . . . and just as regularly as the machine gun, and with a deeply earnest face, Lemke made one bow after another, as if somebody were introducing him to the Frenchies. Schlump stared as if petrified, and something inside began to tickle him. At last he found the picture so funny that he could not hold himself in, and he burst into laughter. "Man alive! Have you gone crazy?"

"Those swine over there keep shooting so close to the ground that the dirt flies right into your jaw."

"That's all right, but why do you keep bowing every time they shoot?"

"Well, you'll see when you get up here. If you don't duck when they shoot, you'll get one in your block, and that'll be the finish of you."

And he sprang down. Schlump clambered up and looked eagerly in the direction of the foe. Over there, behind the slope, there was a reddish light, and the big shells sang above him on their way to the artillery positions behind. Then came the machine guns: tak-tak-tak-tak . . . tak-tak-tak-tak . . . tak-tak-tak-tak . . . And the bullets whistled round his ears like swallows after the thunder. Schlump bethought himself: "When you've heard them whistle, you know they've passed you; then you've nothing more to be

afraid of." There it went again: tak-tak-tak-tak . . . tak-tak-tak-tak . . . tak-tak-tak-tak . . . And suddenly some one behind him laughed out loud.

Startled, Schlump turned round. "Boy!" said the red-headed Lemke. "You make a much nicer bow than me." Schlump had not realized he was doing it at all. The two of them laughed, and then Lemke went off.

Time passed slowly at the post.

And then, of a sudden, he felt the call of nature: he had to go to the place where even the Kaiser himself must go. But he did not dare to leave his post. He exerted himself to repress the need; but in vain. It became more and more pressing. He began to perspire, and he shuffled about, standing first on one foot, then on the other. Still in vain. And the time didn't seem to move: the relief was a hopelessly long way off. He began to sweat blood; his knees trembled under him. But a soldier dare not leave his post . . . least of all before the enemy . . .

But it was just as impossible to . . . They would think it happened in terror. And forever after they'd call him Schlump the sh—breeches. Oh, God! And he had no paper! Then suddenly he thought of the little book of poems which his mother had sent him for Christmas, and which he had always carried about reverently in his breast-pocket.

He sprang down. Close by was the regimental limit, and a signpost stood there: "Infantry Regiment X." At the foot of that sign he left another, somewhat less distinguished. And feeling much lighter he climbed

up again to his post and stared eagerly in front of him, to see whether the enemy had launched an attack in the interval.

No one there. Schlump breathed more easily.

At last his relief came, and he could go down to the dugout to rest. He fell asleep at once. He had two hours' time, after which he had to go for rations. But at the end of an hour he woke: the lance-corporal in charge of the squad, a fellow called Golle, from Saxony, was swearing like a madman. Schlump listened—he suspected that all was not well. And sure enough he was right. The lieutenant had inspected the trench and had put his foot into the sign left by Schlump. He had gone frantic with rage, for the next day the general was due. And now the lance-corporal was swearing in his turn. "If I lay hands on that damn swine! It must be somebody who reads poetry. I saw the paper he wiped his arse on, because I thought it might be a letter. But there was nothing but poems about spring and things like that. I'll catch him! It's one of the new men—used to be a student, I guess." Schlump began to sweat blood again, this time with terror and shame. He lay as still as a mouse, and when the time came, gathered the mess-kits up and ran off for the food.

When he returned, it was time for him to go on guard again. He took his spade along and covered up his shame. Then he sprang back to the step of the trench and wondered how the other fellows managed when they were taken short.

But the whole incident was soon forgotten.

It appeared that the general was really coming. In between guard duty, the men had to dig. In the evening they threw out the dirt which the rain brought down into the trenches, or else worked in No Man's Land. They had to shove the mud back to a distance of two feet in front of the trench. They worked by turns as long as they could, but the French troops had got wind of something, and they began to train their machine guns on the place. The bullets sang and whistled round the heads of the men, and they were prepared every instant to leap back into the trench. But suddenly one of the men uttered a cry and fell down to the bottom of the trench like a wet sack. But he still had enough strength in him to shout, as he fell, "I'm killed!" The others sprang down and stood round him. Before long, however, he opened his eyes again and looked cheerfully up. It was Lemke. He felt himself all over, to find out how much of him was there. He could move all of his limbs, with the exception of his left leg. In an instant he began to wail, as the wound began to pain him. Blood was oozing out of his calf—it seemed to be a harmless wound. The old soldiers, who had been in the war for a year and more, swore at him and envied him. It was a damn shame, they said, to see a young recruit get a wound like that, and be sent to the rear without ever having seen a Frenchie. They would have liked to beat him up, but they gave him a cigarette when he asked for it. Then two stretcher-bearers came and carried

him off. The others climbed up again and resumed the digging. The machine guns across the way had stopped their rattling.

The next day an aeroplane showed up; the weather was depressing and the French didn't seem to care about shooting. It appeared, then, that the general was really coming. The old soldiers were amazed—it was the first time such a thing had happened. The lieutenant had called the platoon commanders together and had issued instructions. Schlump's lance-corporal came back with a serious face and said, "Well, the general is coming, boys. If any one of you is on guard and the general passes and speaks to you, you mustn't turn round. You answer him, but keep your face turned toward the enemy. Shine up your guns and your shoes, and fix yourselves up; I don't want any one in this squad to be noticed." They laughed and cracked bad jokes about the general who had the courage to come as far as the third lines.

Schlump was lucky. He happened to be standing at his post when the general came. Schlump heard a couple of voices; the general was asking questions, and the lieutenant was answering, all subservience and excitement. Schlump looked sharply out in the direction of the enemy. The general stopped behind him and asked him what was his name and what was the password. Schlump stared toward the enemy, kept his back turned to the general, answered briefly and clearly, and did not let the enemy position out of his eyes. The general seemed to be satisfied. He resumed

his conversation with the lieutenant and moved off.

Schlump remained with his thoughts. He did not quite know how he had come out of it. "The general's a jackass if he thinks he can fool the soldiers that way. I hope to God the other generals have more sense than this one, or else we don't stand much chance of winning this war."

But he was doing the general an injustice. The general was not trying to play any jokes on the soldiers; on the contrary, he felt exceedingly serious in the third lines in front of the enemy.

Schlump had cooties. He had picked them up from the Polacks when he slept with them after the digging. But the first cooties were real lice, big white fellows with the iron cross marked on their backs. Now he had the little red ones, and they had crawled into the seams of his shirt. These were the worst kind. And when he stood at his post, he grabbed the front of his coat and rubbed himself raw. But they tortured him most when he was in the dugout, trying to get some sleep, because they became liveliest when he warmed up.

Schlump sat down by the candlelight and picked lice. He caught them, then held them in the candle-flame until they burst. Or else he let them crawl along the narrow wooden bar where the men put their food down during meals, and then ran his thumb *glissando* over them.

Way front, in the first lines, an attack was ex-

pected. Every day the seventh company sent a group forward into the second lines, to wait near the lieutenant's dugout in case of emergency. When the attack came they were to move forward to the first lines and block up the exits leading to the second lines. Those were two pleasant days. They had no guard duty and could laze away the time. There was only the food to bring. One man had a pack of cards. So they played cheerfully and trumped each other's tricks with loud shouts. They had put a covering in front of the dugout entrance, to keep the noise in. The man who went for the food also brought back two flasks of whiskey, and that helped to raise their spirits still higher. They did not notice that the French had begun to use their heavy trench mortars—those gigantic shells which bored their way into the earth and then tore a hole big enough to build a house in. And when one of those shells exploded, the dugout boomed like a bell, and they felt the earth under them shaking for quite a while.

The two days passed without the French having attacked, and they were relieved by the next group. They goose-stepped back to the rear. And it was no easy task to march like that through the thick mud, which clung to their boots and threw them off their feet if they did not press their legs skillfully against the wall of the trench.

Back in the third lines things looked bad. The mortars had smashed the trenches down in many places, and the men had to crawl through gigantic

holes. One dugout had been flattened down completely, and not a single one of the men who had been inside was ever seen again. They occupied their own dugout again: the firing had let up a little—only every hour or so a heavy shell came sailing over. One of them fell in the middle of the trench, right in front of their dugout. But it did not explode; only the propeller flew off and tore off the door of the dugout; afterward they were able to scratch the yellow filling out of the shell with their fingers.

Schlump had become wiser. He knew now where to find the latrines. One fine afternoon he went out to them, behind the third lines, and took off his pants, his coat, and his shirt to delouse himself. This was a luxury which they could permit themselves in the third lines. The sun was shining; the walls of the latrine kept out the wind and hid him from the enemy; he sat down on the bar. Overhead a plane buzzed, and even a lark had started up and sang its peaceful song up there careless of the shells and shrapnel. In the midst of this idyllic scene Schlump pursued his various tasks. And just when he had prepared a splendid assault and had driven the lice out as with a drum fire, so that they fell under his thumb in entire companies—suddenly he heard that soft *zh-zh-zh!* A trench mortar! He looked up and saw the dark bird mounting, straight as an arrow, slow, majestic. It moved clearly toward him and the latrines. Schlump stared as in a trance at the black thing, stared like a hen hypnotized by a serpent. Then the shell reached

its highest point; the tip of it sank forward, preparing for the curved descent. And still the tip of it pointed straight at him. Schlump was fastened to his place. He stared up, and the seconds were like hours. It was falling! It was falling! And right on him. Then he started, grabbed his trousers on both sides, and ran as best he could along the trench which turned off to the right. The spell was broken.

And then! The dull thud! Now it was going to explode. Schlump threw himself down: the side trench was shallow at this point, leaving perhaps a hands-breadth of cover. But it lasted an eternity—he could have run ever so much further. And still it didn't explode. Then, finally, a thick, thunderous explosion, a rushing and roaring, as of a thousand galloping horses. And in the midst of it a strange splashing downpour.

Schlump remembered nothing more. When he came to, he was in the hospital dugout, where they were dressing his wounds. It was the pain that had brought him to. There was a glancing shot in his scalp; the skin had to be sewn together; the bone, too, had been cut slightly; so the assistant medico said, and held his nose. . . .

Schlump was lucky. The Somme offensive was in full swing, the field hospitals were being emptied, and here he was rolling homeward in the hospital train. When he turned on his side he could see the pretty villages sliding by, nesting neatly and cheerily in

the green landscape, so different from the bleak, dark houses of the French. The train followed the length of the Rhine, passing over proud bridges, slowly, but without stopping. In Bacherach they were unloaded. They were carried into a small, quiet house, where silent nuns attended them. An old doctor examined them. Schlump must have attracted his attention by his youth, for the doctor never failed to exchange a few jesting words with him. Schlump was young and his blood was healthy, so that his wound healed rapidly. But he had to remain in bed a couple of months. The bandages were still painful, and when he pulled a face, once, the doctor said, "That's all right, young man: why did you have to shove your head out just when the Frenchies were firing?"

Schlump's answer came swiftly: "You're absolutely right, Doctor: but you know what they'd fire into you if you'd shove your behind out."

The doctor took the impudent answer in good part, for Schlump had already told him how he came by his wound.

Outside the sun was shining, the cherries were ripening, and here they were, lying in bed, bored to death. Next to Schlump lay an old-timer. His name, Gottlob Paul, was written on the board above the bed. He was a poor weaver, from Treuen, in Vogtland. Schlump had told him all about his heroic life in Loffrande, and the weaver kept on asking for more—he had been lying so long in the hospital. He was wounded in the stomach, and his recovery was slow.

"Listen, youngster," he used to beg. "Tell me something: it makes the time pass." And Schlump was off.

"You know, buddy, the peasants in France don't know how to read or write—and they're even worse in geography. One evening Monsieur Rohaut came into the inn—you know, the father of that pretty kid, Jeanne. We sat there awhile and then he said, 'Is it true, Monsieur Émile, that there are so many wolves and bears in Germany?' 'Sure,' I said, 'they're a regular pest in our country. We'd have ten times as many soldiers if it wasn't for the wolves eating up so many of the babies. But then lots of people make their living from the wolves and bears, too. Mostly from the bears. But I want to tell you, catching bears is a real art in our country. I'll tell you how it's done: two men set out on the job. One of them has a sling like a lasso, to catch the bears. And the other one has a pair of pants just like kids wear, with a patch behind and buttons so you can open the patch. Now every one knows bears are crazy about honey, and that's how they play the game. They want to catch the bears alive, because if they shoot them, why, the bullets spoil the fur and you can't get a good price for it. Well, to get them alive, the man with the kid's pants unbuttons the patch, and the other man smears his behind thick with honey. Then the first man gets down on all fours and begins to growl. That, and the honey, attracts the bears. The bears come up to get a lick, and then it's easy for the second man to catch them with the lasso. The only thing is, he has to throw the

lasso very skillfully, so it doesn't get stuck in the honey. Now we had two fellows in our village who were very slick at this game of bear-catching. The first man's name was Mouser, the second was called Louser. One winter evening, about two years ago, they went bear-hunting in the woods. Nighttime is best because then the bears can't see so well. Well, Louser unbuttoned himself and Mouser painted him well with honey. Then he got down on all fours and began to grunt and growl. He was the best growler in our part of the country. But there wasn't a bear to be seen. It was terribly cold, so he began to freeze terribly behind. They were just about to pack up when all of a sudden an old rascal came out, growling loudly. Like all old bears, he had a regular sweet tooth, and he began to lick that honey for all he was worth. That was the time when Mouser should have thrown his lasso. But suddenly he had an idea. He said to himself, 'Where there's one bear, there must be two bears.' And so what does he do but smear the bear's behind with honey, too. As it happened, he had a whole bucketful of honey with him, because it's necessary to renew the layer from time to time. Then sure enough a second master bruin comes nosing his way out of the wood. And Mouser smeared *his* behind with honey, too. And then—as if the devil was in the game—there came a third big bear, and then a fourth. Meanwhile Louser kept crawling on all fours toward the village. The bears followed him step for step, and Mouser smeared the bears' behinds with honey,

one after another. By the time they got to the village Mouser was smearing the twenty-second bear's arse with honey. And then his supply gave out. Louser made for the little fire station, and Mouser, sweating all over, ran in front and opened the gate: and then Louser crawled in, followed by his retinue. All of them got in, for Louser crawled along the walls until he reached the gate again: just then the last bear squeezed in, and then, with a sudden jump, Louser was outside. Mouser banged the door to and shook his comrade by the hand in congratulation. They had captured twenty-two bears. They became rich men."

Gottlob Paul laughed himself sick, and was amazed that the French should be so stupid as to believe this rubbish.

The craziest thoughts and ideas danced about in Schlump's head, and he entertained the whole hospital with them. Only when two months had passed was he permitted to get up. He had a very careful doctor, who liked him because of his merry eyes, and who therefore made him his clerk. This was a stroke of luck for Schlump, who longed for freedom, so that he might thank the girls who used to come walking every day along the garden wall and who used to send him chocolates and other good things. He was permitted to walk there two hours every day, and now he was able to make some return for their kindness.

As the fall of 1916 drew along—the leaves of the

berries were beginning to take on various colors—he was assigned to a new duty. He had to take out the soldiers who had had their legs shot up in the war, and exercise them. At the other end of the town there was a doctor who had various instruments of torture, and with these he used to rack and twist and pull the injured limbs until they began to get limber again. At two o'clock in the afternoon Schlump would deliver the limping heroes to the doctor, and at five o'clock he would call for them again. The hours between were his own. He had discovered a charming little inn in this wonderful old town—an inn that was covered with vines right up to the eaves. A Roman arch—on which were inscribed figures which could no longer be deciphered—led into this paradise. Schlump went into the low room, under the bare rafters. A friendly hostess with a pair of strong arms stood behind the buffet; she had red cheeks and gold teeth. Two charming little kittens, Elly, her niece, and Nelly, her daughter, served the guests. But in the afternoon hardly a guest would show up. It was only in the evening that the red noses of the village would foregather and win the war with their tall talk. Elly was just as old as Schlump—that is to say, eighteen years—and had a sergeant for her sweetheart. Nelly was barely sixteen, and her skin glistened rose and white like an apple-blossom. The father was stationed in Metz, by the great artillery fortress, and whenever he came home on leave, he carried a tremendous sword at his side. But he came very seldom, and the

hostess, who loved him dearly, had to be content with a fat paymaster, who used to come and court her every evening. Sometimes she would spend a day in the country with him, and those were happy hours for Schlump. On such days he did not have to pay for his beer, for he had very little money; the inn was a paradise then. Schlump sat on the old-fashioned stuffed sofa, and on each side of him sat a sweet little kitten, and he could kiss either of them as often as he liked. But sometimes when he pressed her too close, charming little Nelly would show him her claws, for she was still a bashful maiden. But Elly's sweetheart was a sergeant, and she already knew that when a soldier kisses a girl, the right thing is to take it quietly. Beautiful hours those were; the sun spun golden threads through the room, and between the threads danced the white-glowing motes. The vine that lay across the window threw a charming pattern across the rays, and not a sound was heard except for Schlump's kisses and the giggling of the girls. Sometimes things did not go so well: the girls would suddenly attack him and tickle him until he could stand it no longer.

But one day, when Schlump came, Elly was in a bad mood, and sweet little Nelly couldn't be found. Then Schlump stole out—not into the street, but up the narrow stairs, to look for the little kitten. The doors were not locked, and he went along dark, narrow corridors from one room to the other. Then, in the living-room, he came to an entrance covered by a curtain. Very carefully he stepped close, and very

carefully he lifted the curtain and stuck his head through the narrow opening. And what a sight met his eyes! Two steps led down into the tiny room, glowing white, with the sun shining in just as it shone into the parlor below. Behind the curtains that covered the window shone flowers, blue and red, and on a table in front of the window gleamed great white roses. But behind the curtain drawn before the wall stood a dainty little white-enameled bed. And in front of the bed waited a pair of charming little slippers—one of them leaning, as if tired, against the other. Schlump heard the thumping of his own heart, and he did not dare to move. For he saw a slender little foot sticking out from behind the curtain.

He stood there a long time. Then he mastered himself, closed the door behind him, and, with infinite care, went down the two steps. With each step he halted, terrified, for the floor creaked horribly. At length he stood before the curtain and lifted it lightly. There sweet little Nelly lay, fast asleep, with rosy cheeks like a pair of wild roses. She lay there without a blanket to cover her, and all she had on was a pair of transparent drawers; her stockings had slipped downward, disclosing the charming dimples in her knees. One little hand lay by the side of her nose, and she had laid the other exactly where all the great painters lay it when they do not wish to disclose everything. Schlump took heart of grace and kissed her on the mouth. She started in terror, opened her eyes, turned red as a June rose, and with one arm

tried to push him away angrily. But with her other arm she held him close and pressed him to her bosom. . . .

On that day Schlump returned late to the hospital. He would have been glad to sleep in the kennel with the dog if they had wanted to punish him. But nothing happened.

From that day on he used to go straight up into the little room, where his sweet Nelly was already waiting for him impatiently. She had learned now to sheathe her claws and to show him only the soft pads of her paws. Elly stood guard for them and let no one find out, for she understood such matters. Then the mother went to the country for a long visit, and the golden weeks passed until the last autumn leaves had fallen. Finally the mother returned, and the parade sword came down from Metz, too. He had a four-week leave. But by now Schlump had completely recovered; a severe army commission was making the round of the hospital—nothing but merciless army doctors, who would not yield to pull; and Schlump's days were numbered.

Half a year later his sweet little Nelly wrote him at the front that she was expecting a tiny Schlump—but he was not to worry on her account. Her mother was not angry, for she herself was expecting a little paymaster. And the father had ordered a little parade sword in Metz, and Elly was expecting a little sergeant. There would be a regular baptismal celebration. As for Nelly, she now had a sweetheart who

wanted to marry her. He didn't have to be a soldier any more, for his left arm had been shot away. So everything would probably be celebrated together with the wedding. Nelly's long letter came with a love-gift and was packed in with sausage and ham and bacon. The good things came from a pig which had been killed in secret, for by that time poor Germany was already in the grip of hunger.

Schlump was released from the hospital and was assigned to the replacement battalion of his regiment. He set out homeward, and he was lucky enough to get a fourteen-day leave. He would see his mother again!

When he saw the house where they lived and where he had grown up, he began to walk faster, and then he began to run, and at last he stormed up the steps. He rang—and tore the handle of the bell loose. His mother knew that he was coming, but when she saw him standing at the door she got such a fright that she screamed out and fell fainting in his arms. But the instinct of joy brought her round again soon. She did not know what to do for sheer happiness. But soon the thought that her child might be hungry pulled her together. She set down in front of him everything that she had put by from her own meals. But she did not tell him that she had hungered for his sake, in order that there might be bread on the table when he came to see his mother and that he might eat heartily. And the worry that the bread might give out before the

end of his visit already overshadowed her joy. They got their bread measured out by the gram, and his father had to eat because he worked hard in a factory. He had given up tailoring, for there were no more men in the country to order suits of clothes. The mother wept for her son, that he would not have any plump little Christmas loaves to eat. She had very little flour, and she was saving that to make a cake for him.

But Schlump came to the rescue. He had brought a huge sack with him, and this he now unloaded. He took out two gigantic loaves which Nelly had given him. There, in the inn, they did not have to starve, for they were among the lucky few in Germany who had their own fields and grew their own grain. The mother was proud of her son when she heard that a girl had given him the loaves, for all mothers are proud and happy when their sons are favorites with the girls. In the evening the father came home from the factory, and shook him seriously by the hand, and asked him all about the war, and wondered darkly whether they would win in the end. But Schlump could not tell him. He told him instead about the French and about Loffrande, and his parents listened, transfigured, late into the night, and they became young again and cheerful and confident.

The mother was happy. Her boy remained fourteen days with her; he went out little, for he knew that she was unhappy as long as she did not have him by her side. She had suffered much when he enlisted. It cut

her to the heart whenever she saw his schoolmates on the street, still going around in civilian clothes because they had not volunteered. But she said nothing to her boy, because she did not want to hurt him for anything in the world.

There were many things that angered Schlump during his stay at home. There were first of all the milk women, who used to put on all sorts of airs and would ask the price of a pair of good theater seats for an extra drop of milk. Then there were the clerks in the town hall who used to distribute the bread cards and who behaved as if they were God Almighty and treated the terrified women like dirt. One afternoon Schlump went out into the country with his mother to see if they could beg one of the peasants to sell them a piece of butter for good money. But they were turned away from every farmhouse. At last they were able to get some pot-cheese, and on the way home they passed the policeman, and they trembled lest he should find out and take the cheese away from them and eat it up himself. They passed by a barn, and there they saw a couple of plump girls who sat at table breakfasting with French prisoners. Schlump would have liked to fire a couple of shots at them, but all he had was his side-arms and his empty cartridge belt, and you couldn't shoot with that.

Three days before Christmas his leave came to an end. When he reported at battalion headquarters the sergeant sent him round to the supply clerk, and there he got a new outfit. On Christmas Eve a train left for

the front, and Schlump had to go along. His mother was frightened when she saw him in the new uniform, for she knew what this meant. Schlump said good-by to her; she was plucky and did not cry. He joked and laughed, to comfort her. On the street he turned round and waved to her again. She had a handkerchief in her hand and was wiping her eyes with it. On the bridge before the barracks he met a working-girl. She was young, but her face was already old. She saw the new cap and the new uniform, and she stared at him. She stopped short and let him pass; then half aloud she spoke to the air: "There's another poor sheep going to the slaughter. And so young!" Schlump heard her, and he had to laugh.

That afternoon his father got leave from the factory and went with him and his comrades to the train. The music played again as on that day when he first set out for France. Slowly the train drew out of the station. The soldiers lit candles and set up fir branches and celebrated Christmas. They smoked cigars and sang Christmas songs. Then some of them slept, and others played cards.

Schlump had been lying for several days in the trenches, but this time in the first line. On his way to the front he had met an old acquaintance—Willy, the first draughtsman in the factory where Schlump had once worked. Willy had gone through the war from its very beginning. He had been before Paris, and then he had been sent to Russia, and he had been

through the mill: horrible marches, and hunger and thirst and innumerable attacks. He had seen trenches heaped up to the parapet with dead men. The entire regiment got dysentery and many died. And now he had been sent to France, where death was surely waiting for him. For five whole days they had been lying in the front-line trenches. Tomorrow they would go back to the third line. They were stationed not far from the old position where Schlump had been wounded before. The regiment had been placed twice in the Somme, and twice it had been bled white, so that only the sergeant and the clerks and the cooks and the men with the soft jobs in the rear had survived. And even some of these had been wiped out. The handful of men who had escaped with their lives believed that this was the worst slaughter in the whole war. Thus Schlump saw scarcely one familiar face in his company.

The company was still weak in spite of the replacements which had come with Schlump, and every squad had three posts to cover. The nights were dreadfully cold, and during the day it snowed. Then the sun came out, the snow began to melt, and everything became wet. They had English troops in front of them now, and there was a constant cannonade with heavy long-distance naval artillery. Those damned low shots! You barely heard them fired, and they were already on top of you, not an instant's time to take cover.

Whee-ee! "God damn, they're firing short," thought Schlump. "Can't they tell any more where the

second lines are?" Until now the low shots had been dropping on the second-line trenches, where the lieutenant was posted. The day before he had come up front with the sharpshooters. From here they could see the side lines along which the Tommies went for rations. They had to run a good deal of the way above cover, probably because their trenches, too, were covered with several feet of mud. Then they disappeared into a shattered house, behind which stood a vat. The day before the sharpshooter got one man. He got three marks for every man he hit in the presence of witnesses. But the English had marked his position, and now they were taking potshots at him.

Schlump lit a cigarette. Then his friend Willy came round the corner. "Where are you going?" asked Schlump.

Whee-ee!

A hit! Schlump got a crack in his chest and disappeared behind his steel helmet. Everything around him was white smoke; little chalk holes in front of him smoked with fragments of shrapnel, his rifle was smashed and the gas mask which was slung over his shoulder shot through. He was buried in dirt up to his waist, and there was a roaring in his ears. With superhuman strength he lifted the mass of limestone from him and pulled himself out—there lay Willy, and everything around him blood. His face was quite green and his left hand trembled. His breast was ripped bloodily, red lumps hung out from it, there was a hole in his throat as big as a fist.

Schlump scrambled by him; he knew that a second shot was coming, and he flew round the corner and fell into a cave which the sappers had dug. He trembled in every limb, his teeth chattered, he had no control over his body.

Two days he remained in this condition, and then he calmed down. His buddies told him that his face had been as green as Willy's.

Eight o'clock in the evening he had to go on guard once more, again in the third outpost. Willy had been taken away by three men from the squad. The outpost had fallen in and was covered with blood. Now he noted for the first time that his own overcoat was splashed with blood right up to the breast—the blood of his friend. He had taken Willy's rifle, because it was cleaner than his own. Willy's supply of bread, and his other things, had been grabbed by the others. Such was the hunger among the troops. The spirit of comradeship was lacking, for they had not known each other long and had not been through the mill together.

First-line trenches, third-line trenches, rest—this was the wearing, dangerous rhythm into which Schlump's life had now dropped. It wore the nerves bare and dulled them at the same time. They saw no enemy; they simply had to let themselves be shot without being able to defend themselves. Nothing but guard duty, over and over again, there in front of the barbed-wire entanglements. In between they had

to bring food, coffee; they had to dig, and they hunted for lice. Spring was drawing on, there were rumors of an offensive, the spirits of the soldiers were low, they were always hungry, and they began to murmur among themselves. The slices of bread that were handed out became smaller and had to last just as long. Most of the men ate all their rations the night they got them, and then it meant fasting into the next day. And more often than not the man who was sent for food lost half of it on the way, and sometimes he never returned at all. For the Tommies kept their guns going and hunted the men like hares.

The round of twelve days had already passed, and they waited now to be relieved. "Thank God," thought Schlump. "I'll sleep, I'll get rid of the lice, I'll get clean linen." But nothing came of it.

They were sent again to the front-line trenches—but this time to Section D. It was the best section in the regiment, peaceful, with good dugouts. The squad had found a tolerable dugout. True, there was a draft, the men froze, and water dripped from the walls. It was maddening when you wanted to sleep and the cold water dripped down your neck. But the men were tired, and they had to put up with these things, just as they had to put up with the cooties.

The squad had chopped some wood for the platoon commander, and as a reward they got some soldier bread—every man a slice. Schlump happened to be enjoying a two-hour rest period just then. He lay on the wooden trellis which served for bed, and he had

put his mess-kit under his head. The wooden bars were hard, and they rubbed the skin off the hips. There must have been a nest of rats in the wall close by Schlump, with plenty of young ones; they squeaked like babies and kept up a terrible racket. Now and again the father rat went climbing cheerfully over his stomach and sniffed at his bread. Schlump let him climb and went on gnawing his dry crust. He was thinking of home, and of sweet little Nelly, and of Estelle, and he was quite happy. And then he fell asleep.

"Guard duty!"

"God damn!" swore Schlump. "I was just dreaming of piles of food and women. Oh, God, if I could only get a real sleep for once, a real sleep, in a real bed, just as long as I wanted, and without freezing."

"Guard duty!"

Half asleep, Schlump stumbled up into the trench. Mechanically and with closed eyes he dragged everything with him, rifle, gas mask, cartridge belt, hand-grenades. Outside it was biting cold—it was three o'clock in the morning. With a violent effort he forced his eyes open, but he could see nothing. He went along the trench, which was nothing more than a rough excavation; he stumbled and cursed under his breath.

Schlump relieved the other man, who went off without a word. And now he was standing on guard again. Swiftly his legs became ice-cold, and then began the stamping, the constant, unceasing, interminable stamping.

It was a miserable outpost he had. He stood there seeing nothing but the barbed-wire entanglements. The trench ran obliquely forward, made a sharp turn, and then ran obliquely back. It would have been the easiest thing for one of the Tommies to slip into the trench behind him and crack him quietly over the head with a sandbag. It was ghastly. "Watch out for yourself," one of the men from the other company just being relieved said to him. "Two of our fellows had their throats slit by the Tommies; they came creeping up from behind." Then he saw something black flitting in front of him. It was a rat—perhaps a neighbor of the fat old rat in his dugout, the one with the numerous offspring. The rat came closer, sniffed at his rifle, gnawed his gas mask, examined his hand-grenade, and looked at him long and earnestly. It seemed to know him, for it was not at all afraid of him. Then it squatted on its hindquarters and began to clean its whiskers and to wash its paws. Schlump watched it in friendly fashion. He was glad to have a new friend, and he spoke to it softly.

"Stay awhile, won't you? Sit down on my gas mask."

"What in the world are you thinking of?" the rat answered. "I've got seven children to look after; they're all squeaking with hunger. I've simply got to get home. Good-by."

It nodded at him a couple of times and then fled. Schlump looked at his watch: of the two hours that

he had to stand there less than five minutes had passed.

The end of his two-hour period was still a long way off, and Schlump was stamping heavily from one foot to the other.

Watch it! Something in front of the barbed wire. No—nothing. There it goes again! No! It was ghastly. The moon had not shown herself yet, and the night was pitch-dark. Schlump longed to sleep—at his post! —and he leaned against the wall of the trench, where his friend the rat had been squatting and chatting with him. Ah! Something again! Yes, distinct this time. God damn, some one was creeping over.

He snatched up his rifle and began to shoot blindly. The bullets rang against the wires and beat sparks out of them.

He stopped suddenly. There was a deathly silence, except for an occasional shot to the right and left of him: also, in the far distance, the sound of machine guns. There was something ghastly in the silence around him. His heart beat loud, louder than the shots he had just fired. He heard the beat of footsteps behind him and he turned round. It was the corporal on duty.

"Anything wrong here?"

"No. But just send up a rocket, will you?"

The rocket whizzed into the air, hissing; across the way the shadows sank slowly, rose again; the rocket died. Nothing.

The corporal continued his rounds.

Four o'clock! The liaison guard, who was supposed to keep the sentinel in touch with the nearest dugout, hadn't showed up yet. He was perched at the entrance to the dugout, warming himself at the smoke which came out through the pipe. Oh, God, if Schlump could only get a sleep in the dugout! The picture of the dugout rose clearly before him; he saw the men lying asleep, snoring; the candle burned faintly, the stove crackled. It was paradise to him.

It grew colder and colder, and now he could no longer move his legs because of the pain.

Five o'clock. The relief didn't show up. "Goddam swine! They're five minutes late—and not here yet." Schlump began to swear, loudly this time. The blood came into his face. He wanted to run down and fling a hand-grenade into the dugout. . . . What's that? A wild fusillade of shots broke out to the left of him, rockets, and then a regular barrage. Then the Tommies let go with their artillery.

Whee-ee-ee!

Across the way the "Christmas trees" began to rise —red, green, yellow rockets. And then it was hell let loose: heavy shells, light shells, grenades, shrapnel, low shots, little ones, big ones, little ones again; the firing became wilder, crazier; fire-rockets, trench howitzers. He saw the fire-rockets gleaming clear in the air, and then the colored rockets. At last the German artillery began to answer, but with a thin,

niggardly fire. And the shots passed close over his head and exploded in front with a hard sound. It was maddening. Schlump had to laugh; he laughed at the top of his voice into the hellish turmoil. The heavy fuses sang through the air after the shells had exploded, buzzing like bluebottles. A concert!

It lasted a whole hour, until six o'clock, and then suddenly it stopped. Silence! In the east the sky began to light up faintly. A single star was lit, and gleamed out innocently, like the Christ child.

Then the relief came.

The English seemed to be laying down the fire for an offensive. At seven o'clock Schlump had to go on again, but this time he was posted within the trench, and he could move freely. He did not have to stand all the time in one spot and let his legs freeze. The bottom of the trench was thickly sown with fragments of shells from the recent bombardment. Schlump wondered how he had escaped being hit. There were shell splinters lying about that would have left very little of him.

And now they began to fire again. One, two shrapnel, of the smaller kind. Ah! What was that? A heavy low shot: left of him, behind the trench wall, a great bouquet of mud and stones rose sheer. What an explosion! Schlump flung himself into a mine hole which happened to be very comfortable and led deep, deep into the earth. Down below there another war was going on, perhaps more bitter than the war over-

head. You saw them very seldom, those pale, nervous sappers, those moles. They bored down into the earth and listened and sought to blow the Tommies into the air or to flatten them out, if the mine was above the level of the trench floor. A few days ago they had blown an entire length of trench into the air; near Souchez it was; and for many days the valley smoked and stank of powder. A whole company had been wiped out.

Schlump leaned against the entrance to find at least some cover from the heavy shells. He smoked a cigarette. Another hit! And this time right near him, where the machine-gun nest was built in, bomb-proof, covered with cement. Close by there also lay a supply of hand-grenades, hundreds of them heaped together.

One! Two! Those were the little ones—now the big ones were to follow. And then—then—came a terrific explosion: Schlump was thrust away from the wall against which he was leaning. A deep, ringing sound came from the dugout. Schlump stumbled forward. The heavy shell had hit the machine-gun nest, the heap of hand-grenades had exploded. Way up into the air two guardsmen flew: he saw them very clearly, arms and legs spread-eagled. And round the two men danced innumerable, tiny black points—fragments of stone, blobs of mud. Everything fell down in a rain over the way, among the Tommies. The trench had been completely destroyed. Of the two machine gunners absolutely nothing was to be seen. Schlump crawled forward out of the mess and stood up to feel

if his legs were still whole. The Tommies continued to shoot. Small shrapnel, and then a big heavy shell.

The relief approached.

"You've got to go for food!"

"What? In the middle of this shooting? Sh—!"

Schlump shook up the last dregs of coffee in his mess-kit and rubbed them round with his filthy paws in an attempt to clean it.

Then he was off. He ran as fast as he could, above cover, for the trenches were filled with mud; everything was thawing. He ran through the second and third lines, way back toward the artillery, until he reached the stone quarry. The kitchen police had come up this far with two barrels mounted on a small lorry. There was sauerkraut. Schlump filled his own mess-kit and ate ravenously. This kind of reward was permitted only in Company Seven, since they had chosen for kitchen police the most open-handed fellow in the company. Afterward Schlump filled all the other mess-kits and turned back. It was agony, carrying those full mess-kits through the old trenches—the trenches round which the fighting had centered last year and in front of which the artillery now stood. Near the artillery a dead infantryman had been lying now for half a week. He had been hit while carrying food, and the shell had lifted off half his scalp. It lay close by the body, like a plate, and death had spread the brains out neatly on it. Schlump climbed through the second position, which was now unoccupied, toward the third line of the first position. He saw the

tiny rabbit-holes which, two years ago, the troops had clawed out in their death-agony, trying to get some cover during the wild bombardment. He thought of the massed graves which the supply clerk had pointed out a year ago, and he felt as though a cold fist had been laid on him.

At the same instant a shell came roaring over and landed in an old trench ten paces from him. He leaped into the air: his old leather hat, which clung to him miraculously by its strap, rotated furiously over his head and then sank down.

Schlump had flung himself down, and the hot sauerkraut ran over his fingers and over his coat. "They'll swear like mad," he said softly to himself.

The nights were still ice-cold. They were again in the third lines and had just got their evening rations: a piece of black soldier bread, some monkey fat, as they called it (a sort of substitute for lard), and two grams of marmalade. They were hungry and gobbled up everything at once—although the next distribution would not take place until the next midday. Then came the log-carrying—every man had to bring eight logs. These oak beams were fearfully heavy, and Schlump almost broke down: he had tried to pull two of them at a time, so as to have to make the journey only four times. An icy wind blew, cutting his fingers as if with a thousand knives. The cold crept under his finger nails, and Schlump set his teeth until the tears came. On the second trip he took only one log, but

he thought the cold was tearing his fingers off, so horrible was the pain.

He had brought all his eight logs into the trench, and the other men, too, were finished. There were attached to the squad two garrison service men—soldiers who had been declared unfit for the trenches and had been assigned in reality to light barrack work, but they had been sent into the trenches now for the fourth time. The poor devils were half cripples; it was impossible for them to drag the logs, so in between they stood guard duty.

Schlump crept into the dugout. The men were ravenously hungry, but the bread was all gone. They swore and cursed, and then lay down to sleep—but their hunger kept them awake. "They can do any damn thing they like with us," said one man, who had been through the Somme. "If we don't get shot down we just die of hunger."

The night passed. In the morning the men went gathering empty shells and fragments, for back home there was a shortage of raw iron. For every piece of iron they were to get seven pfennig, but the Tommies kept up their fire, and the men had to keep a sharp lookout. As a matter of fact not one of the men ever saw the money, for in between the big offensive came, and no one was left of the company except the sergeant and a couple of clerks.

Midday came, and the K.P. went off at last. He returned at the end of two hours, and, glory be! he had spilled nothing on the way. But early in the after-

noon they felt the pangs of hunger again. What kind of night was this going to be—and no food until the evening of the next day? And then only dry bread. Schlump got together with one of the men: they would crawl back to the artillery and beg some bread—they often had some extra. They reached the rear and were lucky: there was nothing in the artillery kitchen, but as they went farther back toward the heavy artillery stations, they met the bread wagon. High up, in front, sat two gunners. They ran up and begged for bread. The gunners laughed and asked simply, "Do you think we're crazy?" and they drove on. Schlump clenched his fists and said to his buddy, "Listen! We can settle those two fellows! All we have to do is wallop them in the jaw and grab all the bread we want for the squad.

"But they've got their carbines with them, and we've got nothing—" he continued, miserably. "They'll simply shoot us down." They swore, and returned to the dugout with empty hands.

There was one man in the squad whom Schlump could not get along with. For some reason that Schlump could not fathom, the man could not bear the sight of him. He was a hateful beast and did everything he could to make things hard for Schlump. "Well, you louse! I suppose you stole some bread and ate it all up on the way." Schlump put up with a great deal and said nothing. He knew the fellow was waiting for one word from him—and then he would let go. But every man in the squad was tense, with nerves on

edge. "Listen, you! You can go and bring wood, too. We go sweating our heads off, and he sits there warming his bones at the stove." He said it all in a poisonous, rancorous voice. Perhaps he had a grudge against Schlump because he was a volunteer—a war-lover, the others used to say. Or perhaps he had a wife and children at home who wrote him bitter letters. He came from Brandenburg; he had a small, straw-colored head, and a gigantic nose which ended in a sharp point.

In the night they had to dig again. They took up their spades, but they did nothing except curse. Suddenly Big Nose turned fiercely on Schlump: "Work, you Goddam war-lover, do something, or I'll smash this shovel in your face."

He was probably out of his head, but there was a limit, and this was too much for Schlump. "Shut your big trap, you swine!"

"What? What did you say I am?" the other howled, and drawing his side-arm he leaped at Schlump. The others made a circle round them and watched. It was a change.

They struggled, the two of them, in the night, before the enemy. It was a life-and-death struggle. The other man was bigger than Schlump; he showed the whites of his eyes, and his face was distorted like that of a lunatic. It was just possible to see all this by the light glimmer of the snow. "Hurray for the little man! Watch the little man!" the spectators shouted. They forgot everything. Schlump struggled furiously, he

was half out of his mind with rage, he perspired—and then he had him on the floor. He knelt on the big fellow's chest, seized him with both hands by the neck, and dug his thumbs into his throat. "You dog! You're not going to get up any more," he panted. He wanted to throttle him; then the other men pulled him away.

From that time on the man left him in peace. But Schlump kept a close watch on him; he did not trust him. It was horrible: his own comrade!

Schlump was not at all proud of his victory. He lay on the wooden trestle and thought about it: he felt wretchedly uncomfortable, as though he had soiled himself, as though he had committed a dishonorable act. And he thought of the whole of that past day. In the afternoon he had wanted to go out and steal bread, yes, get it even by violence, and in the night he had fought with his own comrade. To such depths had he sunk; to these lengths men go when once they start downward. And then he suddenly remembered what the Q.M.C. sergeant had told him in Loffrande, just before he left for the front: "The trenches are only for fools, or for men who got into trouble." Was the man right after all? There was something in it, at least, for surely there were others who shared this view. And perhaps every one was of the same opinion.—And we're the only ones who don't notice it, we idiots at the front. Yes, yes! It was surely so. Every one treats us with contempt: a blind man could see it. Those two gunners on the bread wagon

yesterday—with what contempt they laughed at us. Two filthy infantrymen begging for bread! And then that sergeant who paid them with a slice of bread for chopping his wood for him. Why, that man must have bread to throw out! "The poor idiots," he must have thought to himself. And the logs they had to chop for him—how big and heavy they were: all for one slice of bread. And they were not permitted to steal away for a moment: it had been strictly forbidden by the lieutenant. And then there were the Tommies, opposite, who kept up a continuous fire and raked the whole section with shrapnel. For one slice of bread! And he remembered the time when they had taken their rest period, when the first company had returned from the front trenches: how miserable the poor devils looked, with their faces pale as ashes, with weary, deep-sunk eyes, with hollow cheeks, with filthy clay worked into the stubble of their beards, emaciated, bent in two, beaten to their knees, dirty, horribly dirty, eaten by lice and covered with blood—twenty men returning where sixty had gone out: yes, he remembered them standing in front of company headquarters, and the fat top-sergeant came out: he had spent those twelve nights in the canteen, drinking beer and playing cards: the top-sergeant, the guardian angel of the company! he came out and snarled at them, as if they were criminals. What was that but contempt? And sometimes, when you passed the lieutenant's dugout in the trenches, what a smell of grilled and roasted meat came streaming out! Did

you ever see a lieutenant eat out of the same plate with us? No, never, never—just as you never see a man eating out of the same plate with a dog. It's true, then, every word of it, what that quartermaster soldier said: a man who has any sort of self-respect doesn't go to the trenches. Schlump talked himself deeper and deeper into this mood of bitterness; he suddenly saw everything with new eyes. He became excited, and for the first time in his life he knew what it was to be unhappy. It was as though he had awakened from deep sleep: he reflected for this first time on his life and on the world at large. He had lost for the moment his golden, childlike innocence. But it did not last long.

And perhaps those others are right, those who despise you. Perhaps this place is only for boobs, for blockheads. It's the same thing in life, isn't it? The man who has a bit of pep in him lifts himself above the mass, where you are a nobody and have no name. "Yes," said Schlump aloud. "You've got to get out of this place. But where? To the artillery. But they'll laugh at you: 'What? you want to insure your life? You're not a bit stupid, boy: I'd like to go there myself!' " Or perhaps to the engineers. But they had it just as bad as in the trenches—or worse. The two sides lie in wait for each other and kill each other in the most horrible way imaginable, without ever once seeing the enemy face to face. Wait! There was the aviation corps. Yes—that was it. There a man was still worth something. There courage and skill still

counted, and every man was a general for himself and looked his enemy in the face. And when you come back from the hunt—why, then you're a man! That was the right idea—the aviation corps. But how was he to get into it? The top-sergeant would just laugh at him: "You want to fly, you hick? Why don't you learn to march properly first and hold your rifle right, you goof!" But there was another way. To achieve something! Distinguish yourself! And not once only, but many times, so as to attract attention. Then you get promotion, you get the Iron Cross, and when you become a sergeant they've got to listen to you.

"If I could become sergeant," thought Schlump, "I'd get a mess-kit full of food and wouldn't even have to fetch it. And I wouldn't have to do any digging and wouldn't have to go on guard duty."

Schlump made up his mind to go out with every patrol and to volunteer whenever the opportunity came. He was thoroughly happy. And even if he got bumped off in the middle of it all, wasn't that better than the eternal misery of the trenches?

Thoroughly happy now, he fell asleep.

They were relieved and were supposed to get six days of rest. They could wash, delouse themselves, put on fresh underwear. The march back to quarters was long and grueling. They had to pass along a defile which the Tommies kept under constant fire. Three o'clock on Monday morning they arrived, dog-tired, half broken, in a state of collapse. Their bodies

hungered from head to foot for sleep. But at six in the morning they were again awakened. Schlump was just dreaming that he had been promoted to sergeant. When the man on duty came to wake him, it seemed to him that he had only just lain down. He swore at the man: "To hell with you!" and the man heard him. Then Schlump had to go out at once and clean the heavy spades while the others were drinking their warm coffee. And the grind began—one inspection after the other: mess-kit, helmet, overcoat, coat, rifle, side-arms, water-bottle: everything had to be like new. And in between, drill: falling flat, getting up, salute exercises. There seemed to be no way of keeping the things clean. There was no soap, or if there was, it was very poor. They scrubbed and polished, they washed and labored, they cleaned and patched, and rest was out of the question. Schlump's dream kept recurring to him, and he had no spirit for this kind of work. At inspection he got a bawling out: "For God's sake, what kind of a pig are you? Just look at that damn filth." And the top-sergeant with the heavy notebook hanging over his chest put a finger through Schlump's buttonhole and pulled him out of the line. "Two hours' punishment drill. And show up every half-hour in full uniform. And God help you if you're not as clean as a pin." And Schlump saw that his dream was yet to be realized.

That night they were permitted to sleep, from early evening right into the next morning. But the night after, the alarm was sounded. At two o'clock

they were torn out of their sleep; they had to make up their packs and be outside in five minutes. And it lasted through the whole night. The artillery happened to be moving forward into position, and it seemed as if their sole object was to splash along the ruts in the road and spatter the infantry with filth. They marched onward for another half hour. The road became drier. Way up there, on a hill, stood the regimental commander, whom Schlump had never seen till now; he held his watch in his hand. "Company Seven is ten minutes late." Then they were permitted to go back to quarters. It was just alarm drill. "They can do that with us!" Schlump was raging.

The next night they were again allowed to sleep right through—but the night after they were on duty. They had to go to the second line of the first position to dig. The company commander did not go along: only Lieutenant Grün and two sergeants. They marched wordlessly, half asleep. When they got to their position it began to rain. The lieutenant crept away to a shelter, and the two sergeants disappeared. The corporals stood by and swore: "Come on, you fellows—keep it up." They were in an evil temper; the Tommies kept up a continuous machine-gun fire from the flank and in front. Schlump worked furiously to make some cover for himself. The trench had fallen in completely. Schlump thought of the cornetist who had fallen on that day. The rain stopped, and it became ice-cold. Then they lay down in the wet filth to

get some sort of shelter from the sharp wind which cut them to the bone.

"Come on, boys! We'll beat it back," one man called out from his corner. The corporals were silent. They put their heads together and cursed. No order came for the return, and they waited there while the hours passed. It became colder and colder. The wind turned wet; it blew with sharp needles, half ice, half water. They lay in the dirt and froze. Slowly the slime came dripping down from the wet trench walls which they had just dug out and grew into heaps of filth behind their backs.

Toward four o'clock the two sergeants returned; they had been all this time in a dugout, playing cards. One of them was still laughing—he was the winner. "Well, boys," he said, "I can't let you go back. I've got to wait for the lieutenant."

At five o'clock, when the east was beginning to light up faintly, the lieutenant returned, half asleep. "March easy," he commanded, softly. They were happy: not one of them had a word to say. Schlump tottered into his quarters.

On Saturday they had no duty—they were to go back to the front the next day. From midday on, Schlump sat steadily in the canteen. He had made a present of his food to the cooks—he couldn't stand the taste of red beet. But there was plenty of beer in the canteen, and he continued to sit there. After the midday meal the lance-corporals came in and sat down at his table, among them Paul Biersack—he was

from Schlump's home town—who had just got his lance-corporal's insignia. Paul took six matches out of his pocket, broke one of them in two, and threw one half away. Then he held the six matches in his hand in such wise that only the red heads were visible, and every soldier had to draw. The man who drew the half match had to pay a round of beer. Then the next man took the five and a half matches and let the others draw. No word was spoken; they sat and drew matches and drank beer and meditated. They knew that the offensive was about to begin and that some of them would never return. They played at this pretty game the entire day, right through the night: noon of the next day came, and the afternoon, too, passed, until five o'clock. By that time only two of them were left in the game: Schlump and Michel Quellmalz—the famous Mike who went along on all the patrols. Paul had been the first man to drop out. And at five o'clock the two men gave up. Then Schlump wrote a letter to his father to congratulate him on his birthday.

At seven o'clock they left their quarters and moved forward to the trenches.

A month later, when Schlump was lying in the hospital, he remembered that delightful game they had played. All the men had been shot down in turn: beginning with Paul and ending with Michel—the famous Mike.

Again they were in the trenches for God knows how long, and no chance had offered itself to Schlump for

a deed of heroism. He still had to go on guard duty, still had to labor with the others, still got no rest and no sleep. There had been a time when he used to get two hours' sleep during the night, but even this time had passed. For now when he lay down for a couple of hours he would get up a dozen times, grab his rifle, his cartridge belt, his hand-grenades, and climb from the dugout into the trench. Outside the cold air awakened him, and he couldn't make out what had pulled him out of his sleep and brought him into the open. Shaking his head, falling asleep where he was, he again crawled back to get another couple of minutes' rest.

"On duty!"

He started up, frightened. "What's the matter? Where am I? Hey, what's the matter?"

"On duty, God damn it!"

Again he took up his rifle, the hand-grenades, the gas mask, and his other paraphernalia, but he did not know whether he was sleeping or awake, or what the matter was. Only outside, where it froze horribly and where the cooties bit him below the uppers of his boots so that he kicked himself alternately with his right foot and with his left, like a madman—only outside did he come to himself and realize that he was awake and not dreaming.

Twenty days they had been stuck there, in the first position. The chalk ate into their backs; as often as they crawled down into their dugout fragments of chalk would break off and fall down the nape of their

necks. Schlump's hands were cut open. For twenty days nothing but filth, filth, filth; not a friendly word, nothing but curses.

How lucky those men were who got an arm shot off or a leg. They were at home now: they could lie down in their beds and sleep, sleep, sleep.

The whole war was a horrible disappointment to Schlump. And still the opportunity to distinguish himself by some heroic act did not turn up.

And suddenly it did turn up. One day the man who went for food reported that the second position had now been filled up by strange troops—from the aviation corps, he thought. They were already constructing new dugouts. They had come back from the Italian front, where they had been wearing Austrian uniforms. "Those Spaghettis got some surprise when they found some real soldiers in front of them." The second position was way behind, on top of a slope. "We're never going to be relieved," the food-carrier said. "We've got to hold on to the last man and the last cartridge. We ought to be glad if we can get our rations through. The English are supposed to be breaking their heads, breaking through to us, and when they get here all they'll find'll be dead soldiers." He had some more news. A couple of days ago the Tommies made a general assault farther down the line, near Section B. The outposts didn't hear them come: they had smeared their faces black and had come creeping over like cats. And just at that moment the German artillery was firing heavily: but they were

firing short, and the whole mess fell on the barbed-wire entanglements between the lines. The effect was horrible. A wild yell went up, and the Tommies came storming over like mad—anything to get out of the barbed wire. But they got stuck halfway and dropped. The German guards, too, weren't asleep, and they sent the alarm all along the trench, and by this time the machine guns were going like fury and the other men were throwing hand-grenades. The Tommies must have thought hell was let loose. One of the bastards came as far as the trench. And then the counter-attack stormed across, but without any luck. It was met by such a burst of machine-gun fire that the men had to look for cover and then try to crawl back. And then the enemy artillery let loose and wiped out the last man. There was one man—he was nothing more than a boy—left hanging on the barbed wire, and he could move neither forward nor back. Hanging there, he got a heavy shot in the stomach and his guts oozed out. He held them with one hand and pressed them back into his body and bellowed with pain like a stuck pig. The Tommies were shooting like madmen, and this poor devil was stuck there, outside. He stared with glassy eyes toward the trenches and from time to time kept crying out, "Mother! Mother!"

It was in the afternoon that Schlump heard about this, and he thought about his resolution. He went over to Section B and saw the poor devil hanging on the wires and holding his intestines. The Tommies

were training a steady artillery fire on the section and from the flank raked the whole stretch with their machine guns. Schlump climbed up on to the fire-step. The moment he stuck his head out there came a burst on the other side—a short, hard tak-tak-tak-tak.

But he climbed out completely, slowly, as if nothing were the matter, and stood up quite erect, and the blue bullets sang around him: whee-ee-ee . . . He ran over to the poor fellow. The man saw him coming, and Schlump thought he saw him wave his hand slightly and move his head in a gesture of gratitude. Schlump undid him carefully: he had got himself stuck on the two hooks of his cartridge belt. Very carefully Schlump undid him and then carried him in front of himself so as to keep him covered from the enemy fire. Then he stepped down gently into the trench and laid the poor devil on the ground. The Tommies were firing like mad.

The boy had his eyes open and still clung convulsively with his hands to his intestines. But he did not move. He was dead.

Michel Quellmalz, with whom he had played matchsticks that day, the famous Mike who crawled out to the barbed wire every night and didn't have to go on any kind of duty, had found out that the Tommies had been relieved. There were Canadians across the way now, he said. An order had come down from the colonel: a patrol had to go out and get an Englishman, dead or alive. Mike was the man for the job, but

he had to have some one go along with him. "Just the thing for me," thought Schlump. But Mike was very particular about the man he took along, and Schlump was afraid that he was too young. He went over to Mike and reported for the job. Mike looked him over and said, "You'll come along with me tonight at half-past one. Outpost Five, Section D. You don't have to bring your steel helmet, or your spade, or your rifle, or anything else." Schlump was tremendously proud. That day he was relieved from all guard duty.

At one o'clock that night he was already up. For safety's sake he stuck a pair of hand-grenades in his pocket. It was pitch-dark. There was neither sky nor stars: only at intervals the moon cast a pale glimmer between the clouds.

Mike came at exactly half-past one. He had his rocket pistol strapped to his side, as usual, but nothing else. They crept out. Mike knew every shell-hole, every mud heap. There were certain places where, the night before, Mike had already cut the barbed wire so that they could get through. At one point he stopped, scratched into the earth, and dug out an English helmet; he put it between his teeth and crawled on. Schlump kept following. They came to a huge mud heap in front of a shell-hole, and there they stopped. With great care Mike bored a peephole in the mud with his hand and looked through. Then he drew Schlump toward him and let him look through, too. Toward the right they could look on a slant right into the English trenches. The sentinel stood there,

unmoving. Mike and Schlump stayed there a long time. Then Mike made a sign and Schlump looked up. The relief was coming. Silently the relieving guard stepped up and the old guard disappeared. They waited a long, long time. Behind them everything was dark: the soldiers had been forbidden to send up any rockets that night. But on the left one rocket was sent up by the Tommies: it whizzed up, swung right and left, and shone for a long time. They did not stir, and in his excitement Schlump bit into his arm. Then everything was dark again. From the south came the steady thunder of cannon; down there the offensive had begun, and every night it came a little nearer.

Mike grabbed him and signaled to him to remain motionless—then he disappeared. Schlump lay alone in front of the English trenches and waited.

Suddenly he saw a Tommy come walking toward him along the trench: he had a steel helmet on and was smoking a short pipe. He looker closer—it was Mike! The pretended Tommy passed by him, reached the post, sprang up beside the real Tommy, and peered out. Neither of them said a word. Schlump held his breath.

All at once Mike swung round and crashed his fist into the Tommy's face: then he sprang out and drew the man after him by the nape of his neck. Schlump sprang forward to help. The man was powerful and heavily built. They dragged him as far as the barbed

wire when the victim suddenly came to life and with one pull freed himself. Mike drew his rocket pistol and shot the man straight in the stomach. The Tommy ran one step farther and then began to bellow like an ox. Schlump and Mike threw themselves on him and grabbed him again—the rocket continued to burn in his body—and pulled him like two lunatics in their direction. And now the Tommies had come to life, and all their machine guns were going like mad in all directions. Then rockets began going up, and the three silhouettes stood out clearly, casting their long shadows. The bullets whistled past their ears and into the barbed wire, where they struck off sparks. One bullet tore the cap from Schlump's head. "If they were to attack now!" he thought. He managed to get one hand free. He drew a hand-grenade from his pocket, tore it open with his teeth, and flung it across. A terrific excitement had taken hold of him. The Tommy bellowed, the machine guns raged, and Schlump burst into a shrill, ringing laugh. Michel's face was expressionless: he still had the pipe in his jaws. He looked cautiously to all sides of him, avoided the deep holes and the cross wires.

The Tommy hit out wildly in his pain, and they had to hold him with all their strength. The barbed wire tore the clothes from their bodies. Schlump felt nothing; the sweat pouring down him, he dragged the wretched Tommy mercilessly through the wire.

They got across at last. The Englishmen had not assaulted. They laid the Tommy down in the trench.

The rocket had eaten the bowels out of him. He lay moveless. He was dead.

"Sh—," said Mike, and walked off.

Spring had come—a couple of pansies blossomed in the rear among the artillery—and had brought the offensive with it. During the days which preceded the offensive, the Tommies had practiced their barrage regularly from four to six every morning. But on a certain day the guns did not stop their drumming. The trenches soon fell in, the dugouts were covered up, and the soldiers lay exposed in the shell-holes, which began to fill with blood and water. After a couple of days the Tommies lifted their barrage over to the third line and the assault was expected momentarily. The food-carrier had been right: they were not going to be relieved; they were to hold out to the last man. But the assault did not come; instead, the Tommies swept the first line steadily with heavy shells. Schlump sprang from one shell-hole to the other—always to the newest hole, because that was thought to be the safest place. Over there, behind the hill, the thunder rolled continuously, and in the night they could catch the flash of the shots. Before long they knew every battery separately by its special flash, and they could tell when one of them shifted position. They also knew more or less the direction covered by each battery. Rations came through the barrage in a thin trickle, and they suffered from hunger and thirst. One day some men belonging to

another regiment came their way, carrying hot coffee in heavy steel buckets. The poor devils had to hop from one shell-hole to the other. Some of them got a rupture and wailed with pain, pitiful to hear and look at. Schlump had become nervous out of constant fear of the shells. He wanted to get out of this mess at any price.

At last the opportunity came.

Over in Section A the English had broken in and had blocked up the trench with a barricade of sandbags. On either side of them the dead and the heavily wounded lay meter-high and built up a new barricade. The first and third companies had been completely wiped out. A counter-assault was now to be made. The shock troops were ready, and volunteers were being sought in every company. Mike was among them, of course, and Schlump reported, too.

They assembled in the rear, in the limestone quarry. To get there they had to run across a flat field which the Tommies kept under constant fire. They raced across, every man separately, with his pack on, his rifle in his hand, pursued by the shells. By the time they got there they were sweating like pigs. In the quarry the sight was horrible. The food had always been brought here. Now everything was filled with blood and bandages, cut-up boots, bloody gas masks, and broken rifles.

It was Sunday. The assault was to take place at five o'clock. Schlump packed away a couple of extra hand-grenades. At three o'clock they assembled. The

lieutenant in charge of the assaulting troops bade farewell to the adjutant of the third battalion, which was stationed round this place. The lieutenant wore glasses, from behind which a pair of friendly blue eyes looked out. He was a high-school teacher by profession. The men moved forward, jumping from hole to hole. The sun was shining warmly. They continued, bearing toward the left. Here the dead, German and English, lay indiscriminately. At one point they had piled themselves into a heap, as if they still wanted to warm themselves in death. Every man lay on his stomach, his head turned to one side, showing his greenish face. Between the black lips the teeth glimmered faintly. Rifles, gas masks, everything in tumbled confusion, soaked in blood—blood, blood everywhere. Here part of a trench wall still stood, there a telephone wire still hung. The men had to bend down as they moved forward. Schlump stumbled against the yellow legging of an officer. The shoe was stuck on it, and the leg in it. The flesh had been cut clean off with the legging. Nothing else of the officer was to be seen.

Half-past four.

At four-fifty the artillery was to start firing, keep it up till five o'clock, and then stop suddenly: at five o'clock the assault was to be made. Meanwhile the Tommies kept up an intermittent fire of heavy shells, which landed at irregular intervals and exploded with a terrific din. Heavy stones flew past their heads

and splashed thickly in the mud. Schlump cowered in a new shell-hole and smoked the last cigar his father had sent him.

Four-fifty. The artillery went off with a sudden burst. What was this? They were aiming short! The entire mess was landing among the German infantry! Now the Tommies returned the fire. It was hell itself let loose. They stormed over without waiting for the command. The lieutenant led. He opened his mouth and wanted to shout something. But suddenly he snapped together like a jackknife; his steel helmet rolled away before him. Dead—the first. Schlump dashed wildly forward, Michel near him, both of them yelling, they did not know what or why. In front of them stood the Tommies, about twenty of them, absolutely motionless. They were blind drunk. They continued to throw their hand-grenades without intermission, but in that pandemonium the explosions were absolutely inaudible. Suddenly Schlump collapsed; he felt pain, he could not tell where, but he could not get on to his feet again. Michel continued to charge—no bullet touched him. Now he was on the Tommies: with a skillful blow he struck the weapon from the grip of one of them.

And now something strange happens. He flings his own rifle away and grabs the Tommy with both arms, as though he wants to wrestle with him. The Tommy is taller than Michel by a head, and of tremendous width. They remain locked in the struggle, while the others charge on. Michel's strength must be super-

human. He holds the Tommy in a tight grip against himself, with his right arm. He has managed to free his left. He tears a hand-grenade out of his pouch and shoves it between himself and his enemy. He presses the Tommy still closer to himself. With his teeth he tears the white cap from the grenade. Now—now—the two of them are torn into tatters. There, where they just stood, locked in combat, rolls Michel's head. It rolls and rolls till it stops, right side up, and looks over at Schlump, the eyes opened wide, looking as though it were trying to laugh.

Schlump lay among the dead on the battlefield, unconscious, surrounded by blood, blood, bloody tatters, human limbs, uniforms and equipment stained dark with blood.

It was morning when he came to. The Tommies had lifted the barrage again over to the third lines, near the second position. But they kept sweeping the field with shell and shrapnel. Schlump felt an agonizing pain in his left shoulder. He could not move his arm. His limbs had slid down into a hole which led into a collapsed dugout. He could feel the blood trickling down his back. His right thigh was swollen, but he could discover no wound. Perhaps a fragment from a spent shot had bruised him. Suddenly something landed close by; stones flew past his head. He started up, terrified, and stumbled away. Near the ruins of a cement dugout he collapsed. But he regained mastery of himself swiftly; the bombardment

became livelier. Suffering indescribable agonies he rose to his feet again, and looked around for a stretcher-bearer. He was crazy with thirst. But there was nothing to be seen. No soldier, no stretcher-bearer, no Tommies. Only the dead lay around; blood had painted the sods red and black, and the shells landing around him exploded with terrific detonations.

He listened for every shot with horrible fear; his senses were abnormally awake; his ear could distinguish everything clearly in spite of the mad tumult. His finger nails clawed at the limestone, the sweat of terror ran over his body. Again a shell landed near him; again he jumped into the air and tore forward. He ran as far as the barricade of sandbags which was piled to the top with the dead.

Then he heard some one talking. There were four men with a machine gun lying in a tremendous shell-hole. With a superhuman effort he crawled over to them and begged for water. But they had none. It was three days since they had received any supplies. They cut his coat into strips and gave him first aid, clumsily. At the bottom of the shell-hole a filthy deposit had gathered, blood, water—and other things. Schlump could not restrain himself. He stooped and drank. The others tore him away. He began to rave, and they had to hold him down.

Meanwhile two men had gone back with mess-kits. Perhaps they would manage to find something. Schlump sprang up and ran after them. There was a

loud ringing in his head, and he felt as if he were terrifically drunk. A mine burst right in front of them, and the two men ran for an old dugout. Schlump could still see the old rafters flying, together with stones and filth. He ran on farther toward a huge heap of rock and limestone. And as he ran on, he heard a fearful screaming behind him: "Buddy! Help! Please! Please! Help!" He ran, whipped on: he stumbled, and it seemed to him that he was falling into a deep, deep abyss.

When he came to, the sun was on the horizon behind gray-black clouds. He was lying on the steps which led down to a dugout. Perhaps there was something to drink down there! Clenching his teeth, he crept down to the bottom. There were some men lying on the wood rests; he touched them; no answer: they were all dead. There was a scurrying of rats. Horrified, he crept out as fast as he could. Once outside, he remained lying on the ground a long time.

The batteries on the other side fired away like mad at the second position. Again he forced himself to get up and ran on. Nothing mattered any more. Better be killed at once than stay here to perish in misery.

He tore through the mad barrage, across the second position, now nothing but shell-holes in which soldiers that he did not know were perched. The shells went by him, screaming, dug into the ground, exploded; stones, gigantic clods, flew into the air; the shell splinters whistled round him. Crack! O-o-sh-sh-in! Wow-

hee! Blood-red death howled before his eyes, gas flames shot up, yellow and greenish, and he kept running, past the artillery, and farther still, as if chased by a thousand furies. Where did he get his strength from? He did not know what drove him on.

At last the bombardment was behind him; only a heavy shell came over at rare intervals from the guns of the Tommies. He no longer sought the field hospital; he kept on running toward the rear, not knowing the locality. He kept running straight, always toward the east. Then suddenly his strength gave out. He dragged himself laboriously forward and every other instant lay moveless.

Hours passed thus, and the whole night. He did not know how long nor whither he had run. In front of him the horizon began to glimmer again with light. He came to a little wood and sat down on a fallen tree.

And there, from a bush not far in front of him, poured a marvelous song. A nightingale was spilling out all the joy that overflowed from its little heart—so yearningly, so sweetly, as if there were still such things as love and happiness in the world. And all at once Schlump saw his homeland, he saw his mother, who kissed him, and he sat again in her lap and she sang her songs to him. The lights of the passing carriages played on the ceiling. The room was warm and cozy and he slept at her breast. Then suddenly he heard music; it came from the Eagle Inn. He watched them dancing. One of the girls signaled to him, and

he went out into the warm, heavy night, under the trees. And there he held her in his arms. "Why, you are Johanna," he said. She whispered in his ear, asking him to dance with her; then she wanted to go home with him.

Schlump lay on the moss by the fallen tree; he lay flat on his stomach, his head turned round, his cheeks burning. He was in a fever. His bloody shirt and bloody bandages showed through his ripped-up uniform.

When Schlump woke again he lay on white pillows and had a white sheet on his body. An artillery detail had picked him up, the hospital orderlies told him, and had put him on their wagon.

Before long they placed him on a stretcher and carried him up into the operating-room. On the steps they passed an orderly carrying a detached, naked leg on his shoulder, like a gun, and cracking jokes about it. They laid Schlump down on the operating-table and a nurse put the gas mask over his mouth. He did not have to count long before his fantasy began to play again.

He was home again. But this time he was near the shooting-galleries, where the merry-go-rounds were turning, next to each other. The music gurgled and tootled and rang crazily, and in between a locomotive whistled loud and hoarsely. The girls sat on the wooden horses; they pulled their skirts up over their knees, shrieked joyously, waved their legs in the air,

and laughed. Suddenly Schlump saw Monsieur Doby at his side. They thrust their way through the crowd and stopped in front of a movie theater. The sun had just set and a million electric lights blazed in the clean, dark blue air. They stood in front of the music watching the little wooden leader of the band, delicate, amiable, in pumps and footman's stockings, beating time. Close by some tremendous posters had been put up, and Schlump saw a tremendous likeness of Michel, the famous Michel, just as he was when he drew the cap out of the hand-grenade and blew himself and the Tommy up. Schlump took Monsieur Doby by the arm and drew him into the movie theater. They sat down in the front rows, where the soldiers were sitting, and looked around. Behind him, in a corner, he perceived his sweet little Nelly, who smiled to him and waved her handkerchief. Before him, in front of the white screen, sat the orchestra, making wild noises which rang like the explosion of bombs and shells. Near the orchestra stood a tall fellow in a black mantle sown with stars. He had a staff in one hand, and on his head was an unbelievably tall cap, on which the sun and moon and all the constellations revolved. On his nose was perched a gigantic pair of glasses. Suddenly it became dark, and the pictures began to dance on the screen. A big announcement appeared, which Schlump could not read. Then he looked into a house where many pretty girls were seated. Every one of them was rocking herself on a soldier's knees. And the soldiers looked at them, trans-

figured with joy, and held the lovely girls close. In the middle stood Michel, the famous Michel, and played the violin. And now the black clown standing near the orchestra began to explain. He hit the screen with his staff and spoke in a ludicrous trumpeting voice. "Private Michel, of the machine-gun squad, had flashing eyes. He seemed always to be grinding a curse between his teeth. For six days the company rested. For six days they brought him his food into the house of the girls. There he played his violin: six days and six nights. Sometimes the violin sobbed; then the girls wept, all the house of the girls wept." The black man struck the screen with his staff, and Michel could be seen playing crazily and all the girls weeping. The black man continued: "Sometimes his violin lashed the girls, so that they became crazy, and all the house was crazy. Then flames darted from his eyes." And again he struck the screen with his staff, and the girls were seen dancing madly, and the flames were seen darting from Michel's eyes. The black man went on: "On the sixth night his violin became alive and the girls screamed like souls in hell. Then he threw his bow into a corner, seized the girls who hung round his neck as if he were a god, and danced with them." The black man struck the screen again. Then it became light. And Schlump looked around him. Darling little Nelly had disappeared, the others too, and only he remained sitting, with Monsieur Doby at his side.

Schlump would have liked to go out, he was beginning to freeze, but again the black man struck the

screen, it became dark, and again he began to speak. "The next day, toward nightfall, they went once more into the trenches. A cold wind blew out of the darkness. No man spoke. Only the trench spades clanked against their legs. They coughed, they stumbled, they cursed. In swift succession the shrapnel burst, curved red through the air, and mocked them. Artillery posts, black patches, leaned against dead walls and were silent. Machine guns barked in the distance. Suddenly the heavy guns behind burst into fire. Every one started with fear. The shells went whistling by them.

"The company froze in the cold holes. Michel wandered through the barbed-wire entanglements, lost. Terror crept over the tormented clods, choked the men under their steel helmets. The stars twinkled treacherously and betrayed all the peoples. Death stood lowering everywhere. Michel hung over the enemy trench and stared down. He descended like a spider on the double post. One of the men he shot in the belly, the other he strangled. He pulled the dying man through the barbed wire; a shrill yelling pierced the night. Rockets went up, machine guns barked, shells howled, bombs, grenades, flames, shouts, whistles, explosions, hell is loose, hell is loose! The earth rocked.—Michel stood among the barbed wire, clenched his fist, laughed horribly, viciously.

"Twelve days and twelve nights Michel stood raging among the barbed wire; then he returned to the house of girls. And Michel played his violin six days and six nights. The next night they went again

into the trenches. Winter and summer, winter and summer, endlessly."

The nurse had not taken the mask off his face yet. The gas forced its way into his blood and poisoned it. And the heart drove the blood up into the brain, which lay in clean coils under the skull, and sank the stupefaction into the tiny cells. The soul detached itself from its bonds and Schlump floated between life and death. His dream became deeper and stranger.

Schlump had to go through everything again, as if some one wanted to torment him. Now the film broke, and on the white wall in front of him appeared an inscription which he could not read. Then he saw a railway train rolling through the darkness. The windows were lit, and inside could be seen soldiers, sleeping. Again the black man hit the screen, so that it rang: "The engine sent long piercing tones into the night. Then came the soundless singing of the darkness. The wheels kept on rolling, rolling, rolling. The soldiers had wrapped themselves in their overcoats, they lay huddled together, they snored, they moaned in their sleep. Michel woke. Stared into the night. Dead cities flew by, forgotten lights. The wheels thundered in rhythm on iron bridges. Underneath the alien river breathed, with mysterious blue points of light. Pain brooded over the land, sucked up the plain, and throttled the dumb woods. Michel seized his violin, lifted the bow lightly, and played with such marvelous delicacy that no one could hear him; he played the

song of suffering. His violin drew magic circles. The night sank slowly. Far, far below crept human beings, like unhappy animals. The blue hills loomed above, there where eternal happiness shone, where the winds were symphonies, where happiness dwelt in golden meadows, where joy was enthroned in temples, where lofty purity had its home, where . . ."

Schlump no longer heard the black clown, he looked with shining eyes at the wonderful pictures. A wonderful landscape unfolded between the blue hills. On a multicolored meadow young people played, indescribably beautiful. And an old man with splendid, shining eyes came up to him and took him by the hand, and in all friendliness led him into the golden meadow. Lovely boys and girls played there, and it was as though they were competing as to who could put most beauty into his motions.

"Do you see?" the old man said. "In this place only such souls are received as have cast away all evil. And since we are nourished on air, we have no occasion ever to do each other wrong." And Schlump breathed in this wonderful air, spiced with the loveliest odors. Sometimes a light wind blew, bringing with it music indescribably sweet. Schlump looked around and perceived upon a gentle height a temple built in a singular style which he had never seen on earth. "That is the home of music; we are now in the vale of beauty, where our souls exercise our bodies, to make them noble, and to create beautiful forms and movements. We will go farther. There the artists live

who conjure out of matter the noblest forms." And Schlump saw how they worked from the living models dancing on the meadow. They passed by splendid gardens, where children were being taught. "Here they are taught to think," the old man said, "for it is our aim to develop the soul in three ways: in goodness, in beauty, and in knowledge. For they must learn the laws of the world in which they live if they are to attain to harmony. Over there you see the school of the adults. But I cannot lead you into that place, for your eyes will not bear the light." Schlump could not look his fill at the splendid flowers and the wonderful colors in the distance and the graceful play of the young ones. "And now I must lead you back into your world," the old man said, and brought him back again to his seat. Then Schlump again saw the black man standing by the screen, striking it with his staff. "Slowly the visionary world sank, night drew on, the magic violin died out softly, Michel was permitted to look on the hills which his bow conjured up . . ."

Then it was light again. Schlump looked around. He sat all alone in the bleak room. Monsieur Doby, too, had disappeared from his side.

Schlump dreamed on. An inscription rose before him; then followed a wild, heroic landscape. A wide river rushed through fruitful fields. The opposite bank rose sheer into the air, bearing a firm city which swung down into the rocks. Farther on, a wide, lofty plain unrolled, on which German soldiers could be

seen, marching. In the distance rose, with threatening gesture, the wild, dark blue mountains. The black astrologer began to recite again.

"The iron rhythm of the wheels had died, the last whistle had been stifled behind the city. The horses beat their tiny hooves against the hard earth. Company, halt! The horses panted. Soldiers lay on the street, in trenches, their feet tingled. Forward march! The sun sank with its burning arrows. The soldiers marched, bowed and grim. The air boiled thickly and threatened to choke them. The hills on the left held their breath. A solitary cloud on the horizon. Dull, heavy, nature threatened them. The company bivouacked in flat, miserable dog-tents on the high plateau. The sky became black swiftly. Sinister silence. A mysterious glow beat out of the earth and lowered round the soldiers: and now the trees stooped to the horizon, which glimmered clearly; the summits whipped the earth soundlessly . . . A sudden roaring and boiling, the storm! Tents flew into the black sky, the rain hissed like bullets, lightning, angry thunder, hail, light, darkness, light, darkness, soldiers dashed about like broken branches in the slime, tumult, fury!

"Michel ran out wildly, driven by the storm, yelling, jubilant, laughing wildly; he tore up the heights and disappeared behind the hills.

"In the hills, where no storm raged, he wanders free and plays his violin. He sings with the birds and the green trees, and the mighty rocks shine with joy.

Michel plays and the meadows blossom under his feet, the flowers shine. The heavens open, wide and blue, and the multicolored little clouds flutter on the multicolored rainbow. Michel wanders on and on; the night descends and sings her quiet song with him. The morning comes, and Michel wanders on. In the evening he goes down into the valley, down to the big river in the plain below. Torrents of icy waters break from the last valleys.

"Michel strode through the forest. His feet, coal-black blots, burned in the moss. The foliage wove weird patches of moonlight which crept aslant through the tattered branches. No bird chirped; snakes shot poisonous glances. Icy air clung to his body, breathed poisonously through the thick foliage. His violin sounded rarely. Behind him the forest sank, in front of him the evening flew wide to the horizon; he ran down into the village. Pointed gables rose in dark summits, touched the sky, which arched itself, black and narrow, over the earth. In the middle of the village, where the dark waters were silent, close to the beech-tree, stood Michel. He gripped the bow in his clenched hand, tore shrill sounds out of the night, flung them against black, poisonous walls, forced the will-o'-the-wisp out of dark holes, flung blue flames on all the roofs, where they danced like demons. A young woman came stealing out of the dark gate, her eyes closed, her arms locked behind her neck, and she danced, danced before Michel, who played longingly on his violin. . . .

"Slowly the night passed; the woman laid herself at Michel's feet. Slowly he stole out of the village, to wander farther. . . ."

It became light again. The crazy black actor began to do something with the cone which he wore on his head. Schlump took advantage of the pause to steal away secretly. Outside he heard the music of the shooting-fest. Then the black man came leaping toward him, grabbed him by the collar, and dragged him back to his seat. In his dream Schlump wondered that his dream could be so crazy, he longed to be awake again, to get rid of this black fool. But his eyelids pressed down heavily; he could not lift them. The black man continued to lecture: "The river carried its songs into the city. Michel idles on the confused bridges, becomes friendly with the colored lights which swim in the dark waters. His violin exchanges whispered secrets with the heavy waters gurgling in dark canals. Michel thrusts his way through dark streets, where the houses hang over his shoulders, goes down into stifling cellars, decaying in cold, sounds the lowest string of his violin, deep and gloomy, crawls up the broken steps, bruises his bones, sounds the lowest string, deep and gloomy. A miserable light steals over noisome filth. A woman, moaning, has borne a child in the decayed straw, and looks at him out of blank eyes. Cruel hunger sits on the lamp and licks the stinking oil. Michel sounds the lowest string, dark and gloomy, creeps through the streets of wretchedness; on the steps Death perches, whores with

Need. Michel stares at the morning, which breaks coldly, lightless and windy, sounds the lowest string in the midst of the cruel whistle of work. Hunted out of their houses they come, twisted backs, huge heads, pigeon chests. Dull footsteps of many people beat against the greenish walls, which shatter the sound. Michel whips a tone out of his violin, on the lowest string, catches the sweeping rhythm of the machines, plays the beat of the wheels, on the lowest string, whips it higher, lashes through all the parts, through all the rafters and the wheels of misery, plays it threateningly in the ears of the rich, so that they grow pale at their tables, plays it in luxuriously gilded halls, lets it ring into the temples, plays it before the altars of love, frightens lust out of its soft pillows, plays, plays day and night by spluttering lamps which burn like horrible wounds in the night, whips out a tone on the upper string, higher, higher still; everything screams out of his violin, work, lamps, wheels, machines, huge heads and pigeon breasts, naked crawling things with blank eyes . . . and they rush out, they tear the stones out of all the plastered streets, build up barricades with stones, ladders; lamps throw fiery wheels, walls collapse, bullets rattle, blood bespatters ripped-up houses, cries, madness, Michel sounds another tone, hateful, infuriating, women tear into tatters bodies of the living, destruction, destruction, bloody heaps, limbs and human beings. Michel steps on shattered limbs, plays one tone, one sound, planks and rafters crash down, fire that consumes

. . . A woman stalks with certain step through ruin and flame, seeks her beloved with her eyes, sees him, sinks joyously, exhausted, into his arms. It is she! She who danced before him in the village! Michel carries her through ruin and misery, strides through the narrow gate, carries her out toward the hills which shine so blue from the distance. . . .

"Michel holds his woman in his arms, strides into the autumn, burned up in happiness, drinks the colors of the happy autumn; the blue sky laughs golden and gleams. Both of them step out into the distant spaces, look deeply into the thousand lands; she twines her arm round his waist, he plays happily on his violin. . . . In the distance gleam the blue hills, and they step down into the valleys.

"Before the courtyard they halt and pledge each other in labor and faithfulness.

"Michel kept the promise he made, did not wait until the cock awakened him, awoke before the morning came to call him, drove his mule through the cool mist, drove the palings in to inclose the herds, swung the hammer with both arms, while the sun set the hills on fire. He felled the hard maple, so that his ax rang through the woods, waking the cuckoo. He labored heavily for the blessing of earth, dammed up the flowing spring, which broke out of the hills. He trundled the mighty round rocks, soaked the thirsty meadows with water.

"A noise sounded from the yard, drove him back to the valley. The stalls rang: the steer had broken out.

It raged among the cows and calves, which screamed with fear. The woman wailed, held her hand over her blessed body. Michel laughed, thrust his way into the stall, grabbed the steer with superhuman force by the horns, harnessed him under the yoke, next to the ox, swung the whip, drove madly out into the field and furrowed the sods, which hissed under him, until the evening. Drove the steaming animals to rest. Kissed his woman, who laughed with joy.

"Outside the night sang, the fire threw red light on floor and tablecloth, painted Michel's shirt with flickering blots, and flung flames into the woman's hair. Michel stood on the hearth, his pants tied at the knees, a belt round his body, and played the violin, played and poured peaceful joy over his wife, who rocked lightly. . . ."

Schlump awoke. He lay in the strong arms of Sister Sophie, who carried him to his bed. She was as big and as blond and as powerful as Germania herself; she tucked him into his bed like the mother who has just bathed her new-born child . . . "Well, sonny," she said, "now have a real good sleep. You're a restless young fellow! What crazy ideas you had in your head!" And Schlump, without answering, fell asleep: fell asleep, for the first time in many days, not to be wakened after two hours. He slept and slept, dreamless and healthy, the happy sleep of youth.

BOOK THREE

THE nurse brought him letters from home. Three of them. They had gone first to the regiment and then had followed him to the hospital. He looked for the letter with his mother's handwriting, opened it, and read:

MY DEAR CHILD:

It is three weeks since I had the last letter from you. We are living in constant fear. I pray often during the day and in the night that the Lord should protect you. There are bad rumors going round the town; they say that our regiment has had heavy losses. What a fearful time you must be going through now, my poor boy. I have no rest. I wake up in the night to pray for you. Then I feel a little better. I hope you will soon be out of danger, and then, my son, write to me, as soon as you can. Oh, if the war were only at an end and you could go to work again, and could come home every day with your merry laugh; the thought of it makes me happy. Father is still working in the factory. God keep you, my dear son, and watch over you in all danger. I hope to get a letter from you soon, from the front, and I hope the war will soon end.

With tenderest greetings from your parents.

Your MOTHER.

Schlump could feel his mother's heart; he could feel how she had tried to hide her anxiety, so as not to make it harder for him. He asked for pen and paper, and wrote home at once.

My dear Parents:

You don't have to worry about me. I am in the hospital and am feeling fine. They've already operated on me, but they didn't find the little shell splinter which is supposed to be sticking in my right shoulder. The operation wasn't at all bad. It doesn't hurt, and you have the most wonderful dreams. I hope to come to you soon, for I will soon be well. The doctors have found a wonderful cure, which is called iodine. If you smear that over your body, you get quite well. Next to me there's a man with catarrh of the stomach and intestines. The doctor said he will be well in three weeks. They paint a kind of iodine on his stomach. On the other side there's a man who got tuberculosis from a shot in the lung. They paint all his lung with iodine, too. The doctor said he would be well in eight weeks. They paint me with iodine, too, between the shoulders, but I can't move my arm yet. Except for that everything's fine, if I only didn't get soup every day.

With best love,

Your Schlump.

Then he took up the second letter; it was addressed to him in a handwriting which he did not know at all. He opened it and read:

Dear Schlump:

You will wonder who wrote you this letter. But you know me, for you kissed me that time,

when the war broke out, under the chestnut trees. You said you wanted to dance with me in the Eagle Inn, but you didn't come. But I was not able to forget you; many a time I accompanied you as you went home from work, walking behind you. Then when you became a soldier I often went to the barracks and looked through the railings and saw you drilling. I was happy when you came in uniform and I cried when the band brought you to the railroad station. Ever since then I always walk through your street, so as to meet your mother. I could read in her face how things were going with you. But for the last fourteen days I have had no rest. I have the feeling that you are in great danger, that you are passing through a dreadful experience. I was three times at the door of your parents' house, and every time I had my hand on the latch, but I didn't dare to go in. So I went back home with my sorrow, and I cried and didn't know what to do. I met your mother a couple of days ago; she looked so careworn; perhaps she hadn't had any news from you for a long time. Then I couldn't stand it any more. I got myself your address (from the mailman who brings your letters) and now I am writing you; let me have just a sign from you, just one word to tell me that you are well; that is all you have to write. You mustn't think you have to love me because I love you so. Do whatever you like, but give me a sign of life; then you can be at rest and you won't hear from me any more.

JOHANNA.

At the bottom was the address: her name was Johanna Schlicht. Schlump could see her now quite

clearly, with her beautiful teeth, her fresh cheeks, and her merry brown eyes. He liked the letter very much, but he was greatly embarrassed as to what to answer. He put the letter down and decided at first to wait a couple of days. He would get an idea. But then his conscience smote him; he thought that perhaps she might be worrying, so he wrote her a postcard, brief and to the point:

DEAR JOHANNA:
I am well and cheerful and am lying in the hospital.

Yours, SCHLUMP.

The third letter was from darling little Nelly. The happy news she had for him has already been set down. Schlump took pen and paper hastily and congratulated her on her wedding and on the baptism of the child. Then he gobbled up the good things which the dear girl had sent him.

The mother's hand trembled as she held her son's letter. She was hardly able to tear open the envelope, and the tears ran from her eyes as she read. Her knees gave way and she had to sit down. She laughed with happiness, and wept, and prayed too. She felt as though some joy too great for her to realize had been prepared for her. Then she took a shawl hastily, threw it over her shoulders, and ran out without locking the door behind her. She ran through the streets to the factory where her husband worked. And it was

only after she had told him the news that she was able to realize how great was her happiness. She went back, more calmly, to the house, looking neither to the right nor to the left. She spoke half audibly as she went: "It can't last much longer now. He ought to be here in fourteen days. And then, before he is quite healed, the war must be over." Once inside the house, she seized a brush and began to scour and sweep and wash and beat, as though she would be shamed by her son if he did not find every corner and every curtain as clean as a new pin. She got herself a railway time-table, gave the father his glasses and pencil, so that he could write down every train by which her son might be returning from France. And day by day, and into the night, she went down to the station, and counted the soldiers one by one as they came in, to see if perhaps she might find among those brown faces one young one that was to her the dearest in the world. And when she did not find it she was not sad and not disappointed: "for," she said to herself, "it can't be long now; sooner or later he must come."

Schlump carried his right arm in a sling. He was permitted to get up and walk around. The hospital was overcrowded, and he expected to be transferred any day. And every day the wounded came in in droves. His two neighbors had long since been removed. In one bed lay a flier, wrapped in white bandages from head to foot; in the bandages were two little holes for his eyes and an opening for his mouth. To the other side of him lay a drunken Tommy, with

hands and back fearfully mangled by hand-grenades; it was only on the second day that he came out of his drunk and groaned fearfully. Victims of poison gas were brought into the hospital; their faces were gray, their hands blue, and they panted in agony for a breath of air. And early one morning, at five o'clock, Schlump got the order: "Every man that can stand on his feet must get dressed; there's a hospital train coming, with room for a few men." Schlump took his foul, verminous clothes from the closet; they were quite stiff with filth and blood, and the right arm was missing from the jacket. But he didn't care at all. About twenty of them fell in, bandaged heads and limbs, canes and crutches, and marched off to the railway station. But there was no sign of the hospital train with the big red cross. They ranged themselves on the railway platform and waited, waited patiently, with shining eyes, for they already saw their homes. But the train didn't come. Midday came and went, but not the big red crosses. Some of the men collapsed and had to be carried into the waiting-room, and from there they were taken back to the hospital. They were not to enter the promised land. The afternoon passed.

At last, toward six o'clock in the evening—they had waited twelve hours—the train came. But it was already packed. They jammed themselves in as well as they could, and they trembled when a doctor passed, for they did not want to be thrown out again. The latrine orderlies bawled them out and threatened to bring the head doctor, and the wounded soldiers

answered cringingly, with soft words. Then the locomotive whistled, the train rolled slowly out of the station, homeward. Often it came to a halt in the open country, then started off again; they rolled thundering over the proud Rhine toward Westphalia into the Wieser hill country. There they were taken off and lodged in a school. Schlump was eager to see his mother and his father again. He begged the doctor, he wrote out requests, he gave the clerk money, so that he might be transferred to the home hospital. And after four weeks, four long, eternally long weeks, he succeeded. He got his pay, a day's rations, and a railway slip, and left the hospital, singing, joyous, and went home. He stepped down from the train and out of the station. His mother came running toward him and embraced him and kissed him openly in front of every one. Then she walked proudly along with her son, who had his arm in a sling, and asked him a thousand anxious questions, often without hearing the answers aright.

They went up the stairs, and the door opened: a pale, thin, overgrown girl of twelve years stretched out a hand to him. "Who is it?" asked Schlump, astonished. "Why, it's Dorothy," his mother said, and then he remembered that his mother had written him about her. She was the daughter of his mother's sister, whose man had been killed. And fourteen days afterward the mother of the girl had also died of hunger and sorrow, and the child was alone in the world and had been adopted by Schlump's parents. The poor

child had cared for the mother in her last moments, and she had had to see how hard a mother dies when she leaves a child behind. Schlump gave his hand to poor Dorothy and said some friendly words to her. In the evening his father came, and Schlump was frightened to see how old he had grown. He walked with a stoop, and when he went up the steps he had to stop every minute or two and hold on to the railing, because his strength was giving out. His mother was unhappy that when her son came she could offer him neither bread nor meat. And she did not tell him that it was a long time since they had had potatoes enough to eat their fill. But she laid a cloth on the table and brought in a little bowl of cauliflower which she had saved from her own meals. And then Schlump brought out the bread and the canned meat which they had given him, and they sat down and ate.

The very next day Schlump had to report at the hospital. The medical orderly took away his uniform and gave him a patient's gown and slippers. Then began the even, monotonous hospital life. All day long they sat on the wall surrounding the hospital and watched the girls passing. They smoked and played cards, but they could not forget the hunger which tormented them perpetually. For all they received was watery soup and sometimes a couple of slices of bread which were so thin that they would have let the moonlight through. The bread was smeared with a marmalade which tasted sharp. Schlump soon lost his healthy

red-brown color and became horribly thin. He longed to be out of the hospital again. But his arm still remained stiff and hurt when he moved it. Very rarely did Schlump get a permit to visit his parents. The house had a sad look about it. For the midday meal they had beets without meat or fat and in the evening potatoes, which they washed down with black coffee. His mother was miserable because she had nothing to give her son, and Dorothy became paler and paler, and the husband more and more broken. The mother herself looked drawn and became a very old woman. One day the father could not get out of his bed. The careworn mother sent for the doctor, and he diagnosed it as typhoid—hunger typhoid. They could give the sick man nothing to put strength into his exhausted body, and so he sank lower from day to day. One morning poor Dorothy came to Schlump in the hospital and cried. His father was dead. Schlump went along to the funeral. He had to hold his mother up: she kept on sobbing, but she had no tears to shed. Then the three of them returned to the house, silent and sad. In the evening Schlump had to go back to the hospital.

At last his wound was completely healed, and now they began to massage it so that the skin and the flesh and muscles should become supple. Then they harnessed him in a steel machine which let the arm hang free, so that it might recover its mobility. They wanted to get through with him quickly, for they needed soldiers in the trenches, and the war was be-

coming steadily more horrible. But the exercising of his arm was a long business; it was wearisome and painful. The mother was happy that her son could remain in the hospital and did not have to go out and face the enemy. She had suffered too much torment, and she was afraid that she would never survive a third period of anguish; then the two children would remain alone in the world, in the heartless world. Schlump had to promise her never to go to the front again. There were plenty of others who had not risked their lives yet; so many hospital inspectors, paymasters, and other well-fed gentlemen with officer's epaulettes. And Schlump made the promise, to comfort her. But it did not lie in his power to keep the promise.

One morning Schlump awoke in his bed before it was time to get up. He heard some one cursing near him. He opened his eyes slightly and peered across. There was some one sitting on his neighbor's bed, speaking eagerly to him. Schlump closed his eyes and listened:

"Yes," said the man sitting on the bed, "I play the crazy clown. When the doctor comes to me, I begin to rave, I foam at the mouth and I lash out round me. And if any one tries to stop me, I just crack him one in the jaw. At first I was in the barracks hospital, and there I knocked the doctor down. So they brought me to this place for observation. Man alive, they'll never get me back to the front again. Before they can do that, they'll have to get all those healthy, well-fed bums

who are still running around free. If you want to see them, you've only got to take a walk through the city or go to the market place or anywhere at all in the city."

"That's absolutely right," the man in the bed answered. "I've got another stunt, though. I play the appendicitis game."

"Is that so? How do you manage that?"

"Well, it isn't so simple. The fact is, you must have had appendicitis one time or another. And then you know exactly where the appendix is. Then you must get a hard knot of flesh there: that's pretty easy. And you've got to have a little fever: not too much. You know how that's done."

"Sure: rub the thermometer under your armpit."

"That's right. But that game doesn't last long; eight weeks at the most."

"And after that?"

"After that they send me back to the armory—light duty. You stay there a couple of weeks, till the air gets too thick again. Firing squad—you know. And then I get shell shock. You know how that's done, don't you? The most important thing about that is to have an accelerated heart-beat. That can be done, too. You've got to concentrate all your mind on it, all the time, and your heart begins to flutter of itself."

"That's all very fine, but there's a string to it. I had a buddy who played that game. Shell shock. They sent him off to a place called Schkeuditz—somewhere near Leipzig. And in Homburg, too, there's a torture cham-

ber like that. I tell you, that electric treatment is the real torture. It must be awful. This buddy of mine howled like a stuck pig: he told me he begged them on his knees not to tie him to the current. But those men are murderers; strong as iron and no pity. If they try to send me to that place, I'll kill some one first; I'd rather go to prison."

Suddenly they were silent. Schlump had heard every word; it gave him a great deal to think about.

Schlump was bored. He sat with his friend on the hospital wall and watched the girls.

"Are you game?" his neighbor asked. "I'm going to beat it tonight. I know a fine little dive where there's food and women. But you've got to get your parade uniform and hide it in the bowling alley this afternoon."

Schlump had a parade uniform of his own which his father had made him when he was still a recruit. Of course Schlump fell in with the idea, and they made arrangements. The corporal gave him his fatigue uniform, and Schlump went home in it. There he put on the tight-fitting coat and pants under the uniform and thus smuggled the things into the hospital. While in bed, he pulled the fatigue uniform off, and gave it back to the corporal. Later he hid the tight-fitting uniform in the bowling alley. In the evening they went to bed as usual and waited till every one was asleep. It took a long time. At last the other man gave him the sign and Schlump stole unnoticed to the

toilet. The other man was already there. The latter was the first to draw himself up and climb through the window which ventilated the toilet. Schlump helped him as well as he could. On the other side of the wall, his buddy was able to stand on an iron railing and draw Schlump up after him: for Schlump could only make use of one arm. Schlump squeezed through the narrow little window slowly and carefully, and at last they were outside. In the bowling alley they took their gowns off and drew on their shoes and uniforms. Schlump had learned long ago to fasten his collar and lace his shoes with one hand. Then they sprang over the wall. This was not without danger, for they might have missed their footing, but luck was with them. Schlump wiped the sweat off his forehead.

They stole through the park, through narrow streets where the sleepy gas lamps threw their yellow light into the blue night. The heavy branches hung drunk with sleep over the crooked walls, behind which the houses slept. And the wind that was resting in the trees sometimes whispered in its dreams. They stole lightly along the walls and stopped every instant to listen for the guard. For they had neither passes nor any other kind of permit. They went over narrow bridges and climbed up steep stairways, along which there ran iron railings polished by the many hands which used them during the day. At last they turned off into a very narrow alley and came upon a tiny square surrounded by old, low houses. In the middle of the square was an old-fashioned wall, inclosed by

two lime trees, and at the side of the square was a broad, dismantled tower which had once belonged to a church. But where the church had once been there was now an inn. The windows were tightly closed and covered, and only a tiny beam broke through. They stumbled across the uneven plastered ground and entered the inn.

In the thick cloud of tobacco smoke, Schlump could distinguish nothing. Then gradually he made out a powerful fellow who wore infantry trousers and a sailor's blouse and was singing in a hoarse, drunken voice a song not intended for very delicate ears. At the tables sat heavy, powerful men with insolent faces. Some of them had sailor's jackets on and others field-gray coats. It was impossible to tell whether they were soldiers or not.

Schlump's buddy drew him through the parlor into a tiny little room. Somehow or other a table had been squeezed into it: and they had also managed to get in a sofa and a couple of chairs—and a phonograph. They ordered wine and roast rabbit. The door to the main parlor had been taken out and they could see everything. Among the men were numbers of women, some of whom Schlump knew. Their husbands were either at the front or had been killed. But his attention was attracted particularly by a powerful, beautiful girl with healthy cheeks and lovely arms. "That's the boss's daughter," his buddy said. "She's pregnant: you can see that. Her sweetheart happens to be in prison—or in a penal regiment. I don't know exactly

what he did. That fellow next to her is the prosecutor for the red-light district. It's his job to check up on all the women here. But you don't have to be afraid: they're all in the same boat. Boy! That fellow lives the life of a Turk. He'd like to have that pretty Katherine, too, but there's nothing doing, she's faithful to her man. He's a wild man, all right; he used to beat her up, but she sticks to him and won't have any other. Him and the prosecutor, they can't stand the sight of each other. But what the hell do we care? The main thing is to get something to eat."

They ate like wild animals. There were potatoes too.

In between one man started the phonograph—and before long he had broken it, too. Meanwhile Schlump had finished his meal. He sat down on the table and began to play the mouth-organ which he had seen lying on the window ledge. He had learned to play this—as he had learned to play the piano—when he was a child, without music, by ear, from the foreman who lived in the flat below. The crowd in the inn liked it, and they began to dance. The prosecutor danced with the pretty daughter of the proprietor. The men were grateful for the music and brought him whiskey, and the women looked at him with curious and eager eyes. And that pleased him in turn, and he played a livelier melody. Then the door which led to the kitchen opened, and some one stood there—it was hard to say whether it was a child or a woman. She stood on the threshold and did not move. Her body was already fully formed, but her mouth looked as if it had not

been kissed often. Her eyes were half closed, and with the back of her hand she pushed the hair up from her forehead. But her eyes flashed under their thick lashes, and she turned them toward all the people in the room, particularly the men. She saw her sister dancing with the prosecutor, but her gaze passed on, undisturbed. When it came to Schlump, it stopped; she opened her eyes to the full, two big, coal-black eyes, and looked at him swiftly: Schlump happened to look in that direction and caught the glance. But her eyelids sank again, leaving a narrow slit, and her body remained motionless. But Schlump had the feeling that she was watching him; he felt her glance sliding over his body, as though she wanted to feel him with her senses. The thought of it fired his blood, and he played something else and gave the people in the inn no rest. He kept looking past her, and his thoughts were always on her. Suddenly she left her place at the door and went past him, behind—he was standing now in front of the table, half in the other room—and she brushed him with her clothes, and, as it seemed to him, with her fingers too. Then she disappeared, and he never saw her again the whole of that evening.

Schlump played long. He suspected that it was the sister of the host's pretty daughter. But he did not ask. He said nothing at all on the way back to the hospital.

The next day Schlump wandered around like a man bewitched. Wherever he went, those black eyes fol-

lowed him. And he always had the feeling that she was so close to him that he could touch her, or as if she had just passed through the room and the breath of her clothes and of her hair had stroked him in passing. He stood for long intervals in one place, brooding, and then looked up suddenly as if in the certainty that she would be there, in front of him. He went up the steps to the reading-room and stopped halfway up and listened. It seemed to him that she had called him. He waited a long time, then looked round eagerly. He had been absolutely certain that she had passed behind him and had touched him. Then he leaned on the stair rail and pressed his cheek against the cool wood and then suddenly went right up to the top of the stairs. At the top he sat down for a long time and thought of the inn, and could not wait until the night. For he was thinking of stealing out again that night and of going to the inn in the tower. His buddy didn't feel like it, and Schlump had to do the whole business alone.

It needed a superhuman effort to get through the narrow window of the toilet. He ran through the night-covered streets, and he played again in the inn, as on the night before. And so it went, week after week, and it was a miracle that the corporal on guard did not catch him. They all knew him by now in the tower inn. They had obtained a better mouth-organ for him, and they promised Schlump to pay for all his drinks as long as he played for them. He did not refuse, for he had a real knack for playing the harmonica. And thus he was able to eat roast rabbit and drink wine.

Sometimes dark little Margaret showed herself. Then Schlump was happy and played like a demon. She often came up to him and looked at him out of her witch's eyes. She rocked her body in time with the music, and looked at him under lowered eyelids, so that he turned hot. She placed her small hands on her hips and rocked her body like a gypsy. More than once Schlump was on the point of flinging away the harmonica and grabbing hold of her. But she put on an expression of indifference, touched with something of mockery, and his courage forsook him. On such nights he stole back to the hospital filled with happiness. But his wretchedness was boundless on those nights when she did not show up. The day that followed seemed to him long as eternity, and he did not know what to do with himself. He tried to play chess, but he was absent-minded and spoiled the game for his opponent. He sat down in the reading-room and smoked cigarette after cigarette—he used to get them from the daughter of the hospital shopkeeper. She was a fine, good girl, with whom he had made friends just to take up his time. She did everything he asked of her, but most of the time he forgot to thank her.

One Saturday evening he came again into the tower inn. He took up the harmonica and began to play. Across the way, the big parlor was filled to the corners. They talked loud and long and seemed to have little desire to dance. Katherine had two men sitting by her. On one side was the prosecutor and on the other a slim, handsome fellow with an energetic face.

He had thrust his cap back on his head; his hands were in his trousers pockets, and he smoked a cigarette. He had an angry expression on his face, and he kept turning his back on her. The others called to him. It was her sweetheart, the handsome Max, who had just returned from the pen. Katherine petted him and waited on him, but he did not budge. The people at the other tables observed them furtively. Schlump played, and at last they began to dance.

Katherine wanted to dance with her Max; she stood up, but he shrugged his shoulders and laughed loudly and drank one whiskey after another. Katherine danced with the prosecutor. Handsome Max seemed to notice nothing. Suddenly he stood up, thrust his way among the couples, and stood in front of the two. He raised his arm and drove his fist with terrific force into the prosecutor's face, so that he fell to the floor like a wet sack. The women screamed, a couple of young men wanted to pull the prosecutor under the table, but Max turned on them in fury. . . . Chairs fell; tables, beer-glasses, flew through the air; handsome Max bellowed like a bull, seized a chair by the leg, and swung it through the air: a wild scene followed, the gas lamp trembled—and suddenly a woman's voice, shrill as a whip, sounded:

"Police!"

The lamp was smashed into smithereens, there was a terrific trampling in the dark, Schlump threw his harmonica away and sped through the kitchen into the yard. It was pitch-black, and he had no idea where

he was going. Suddenly a small hand laid hold of him, drew him forcibly along up some narrow steps, through a dark passage, again up steps, across a floor, up a ladder, on up into the garret, which smelt of the hay which was kept there for the goats. Then he felt a soft body, a pair of lips; it was dark little Margaret, and both of them sank into the hay and forgot the world.

It was broad daylight when Schlump returned to the hospital. He felt like a young fox that had drunk its fill of blood in the hen-coop and was now returning to its hole. The corporal swore and threatened him with every sort of punishment to be found in the German army. Schlump did not listen. He let them take his tight-fitting uniform, to which wisps of straw still clung, and his thoughts were far away.

The corporal on duty reported him. Schlump was sentenced to three days in the coop—to be served as soon as he was released from the hospital. They also moved his bed to another room, from which he could not break out, and on top of everything they issued no more passes to the town. And that was the unkindest cut of all, for now there was no more roast rabbit and no more wine. The eternal soup and bread with marmalade could not satisfy him. Poor Schlump became paler and leaner from day to day, and lost weight at the rate of a pound daily. And if it hadn't been for the hospital shopkeeper's daughter, who would lift something for him every now and then, he

might have gone under. This is what happened with several of the patients: the most fortunate were the peasant boys, the butchers, and the bakers, for they got parcels from home. Schlump had struck up a friendship with a boy of his own age, one Friedrich August Mehle. He too was cursed with eternal hunger. The two of them would sit together and console each other. Schlump had to tell him over and over again about the war, about Loffrande, and Mehle could not wait for the day when he would be well again. He had contracted catarrh of the stomach and intestines from the unchanging diet of turnips fed to the recruit companies, and he would gladly have volunteered for service in France or Russia or Italy or Roumania, perhaps even in Salonika or Palestine, or even as far off as Bagdad. He wanted adventure and the sight of foreign nations. His mother was dead, and he had only an old father who was taken up with himself.

Schlump was now able to move his arm quite a distance sideways, but not backward, and only a little distance forward. But they had to make room in the hospital: a merciless commission of lynx-eyed military doctors turned up and declared them all cured. Schlump was transferred from the hospital to the convalescent company. As a matter of fact he should have served his three-day sentence, but the coops were full, and so he still had to wait a week for his turn.

The convalescent company had been lodged in an old inn outside the city. It was a sorry collection. Schlump picked out a bed in a room where the peasant

girls used to wash the dishes. He looked around. An old acquaintance of his, who had been in the same company with him at the front, came up to him, greeted him, and began to tell him all about his new home. Near him lay a man who would go off every now and then into a raving fit. Then every one had to make himself scarce for fear of assault and battery. The stools, the benches, and the crutches had for the same reason been removed from his vicinity. To the rear of Schlump there sat on a bed a man who had lost his senses, and every now and again he would cry out "Mamma, mamma," and ask for the milk-bottle. His buddies had to feed him and clean him like a little baby. But they were not always around. He was going to be transferred somewhere before long, for that reason. They were waiting until there was room in the insane asylum, for that too was overcrowded. Behind this man, on another bed, sat one who had had his chin shot away; he looked like a vulture, a terrifying sight. In one corner of the room a man lay isolated. He had been shot in the stomach, and it was impossible to go near him because of the fearful stink, for he could not keep his bowels in. On the benches ranged round the walls sat cripples of every description, a horrible gallery of malformities in field-gray uniforms.

Schlump had brought his rations and ate with little appetite; he was not accustomed yet to his surroundings. Near him sat a man who kept up a rapid and incessant drumming with his feet on the floor, while he

shook his head from side to side, the spittle dribbling out of his mouth. In the nights Schlump dreamed of hell, of ghastly monsters and of other fearful things.

But every man that could be used at all was put to work. One day they had to peel chestnuts (before Schlump had noticed it the autumn had already come), the next day they had to carry mud into the major's garden, the third day they had to feed the pigs for the garrison. The first moment of liberty he had, Schlump ran off to the tower inn, to find his Margaret. But the door was locked, the windows covered; it was as though every one in the house had died. In his consternation Schlump made inquiries of the neighbors. "They've all been locked up," was the answer. "And they've sent little Margaret to some relatives in Berlin." Schlump turned back sadly, and he never saw Margaret again.

His friend Friedrich August Mehle, who had been discharged from the hospital together with him, had not had much luck either. Right in front of the garrison lay a tremendous barn in which the potatoes intended for the troops were stored. A guard was maintained during the night, for the poor soldiers sacrificed their sleep, which they needed so badly, in order to steal these potatoes. Friedrich August Mehle had been unfortunate enough to be put on potato guard duty. And he stood like a good soldier at his post and saw to it that his poor buddies should be able to lift a few potatoes in peace. When the sergeant was to come home late from a visit to his girl, Mehle, like

the good fellow he was, would pass the word along to his friends. In return they paid him in kind out of their booty. But once when with infinite care and patience they had finished cooking their potatoes in their mess-kits—they did it at midnight, over the flame of a candle, after having covered all the windows—a dirty little corporal surprised them (the other non-coms knew all about it, but they kept their eyes shut) and reported the incident. He was promoted for his vigilance, but his buddies were punished and Friedrich August Mehle was court-martialed for negligence. However, the judges were a kindly lot and all he got was six days' solitary confinement.

It fell out that Schlump had to serve his sentence at the same time. And so the two friends marched through the town, their hard-tack rations under their arms, their service caps perched on their heads, surrounded by a guard of honor, four men and a corporal, with helmets and fixed bayonets.

Schlump had three whole days and three whole nights during which he could meditate on himself and on the world. He saw himself again as a little boy who ran away from his father up the hills behind which the sun always set and where the door of heaven must be. Then he saw himself in Loffrande, pointing out the stars to the blond Estelle. Then he thought of his dream, in which he had actually entered heaven. . . . Then suddenly he thought of the letter which

the nurse had laid on his bed, the letter from Johanna, in which she had told him of her love. She stood before him again, just as on the night when he had got to know her, in the Eagle Inn, on the eve of the war. She danced in the hall below, and sometimes she smiled up to him in the gallery. He had answered her letter so rudely. How could he have forgotten her so?

And he made up his mind to go and find her as soon as his term of imprisonment was over. The three days passed, more swiftly than he had expected, and he could report once again to the convalescent company, the troop of cripples. On the following day he had some free time, and he went by her house, for he had her address. Strangely enough, he had never forgotten that. But he did not find her. And he did not trust himself to go in and ask for her. So he had to go away again. But he did not give up. He passed that way again and again, and at last luck was with him. She was just coming out of the baker's shop, her basket on her arm, and in her hand a couple of bread tickets. And suddenly his heart began to beat violently. She looked up and recognized him immediately; she reddened right down to her throat. Helplessly, he stretched out his hand to her, and there the two of them stood, horribly embarrassed, and happy to have found each other. She seemed so good and so beautiful to him that he could not think of any other girl to compare with her. What he would have liked would be to kiss something of hers, her hair, her

dress, or her beautiful hands. But he remained standing, motionless. At last she said to him, "Oh, Schlump —I mean Mr. Schulz, are you all well again?"

"Yes," he answered. "I can move my arm again; at least, I can move it sideways, but backward and forward it's not so good."

And he showed her exactly what he could and couldn't do with his arm. He was happy to have something that he could talk about more or less formally and at length. But he soon exhausted the subject, and there he stood again, silent. Neither of them knew how long they had been standing there, till at last she shook hands with him again, looked away somewhere, and said, "Well, good luck to you." And she went. And Schlump looked after her thoughtfully and sorrowfully, and his gaze took in her slender figure until she vanished through a door. Then he turned round and returned to the barracks.

There he heard again the loud voices, the rough talk, the commands, the dirty jokes. He drew a deep breath and shook himself, and soon he was back in the swim of things.

Once a week—sometimes every three days—they were reëxamined. The doctor, a plump fellow who smelt of pomade, treated the convalescent soldiers like malingerers, though he himself had never been a soldier and had not the faintest notion what it felt like to be sick or lie wounded in a shell-hole. He marked them all "Ready for duty"—unless one of them happened to be short of a leg or had his head

twisted below his shoulders. When Schlump came up before him for the first time he grabbed him by his sick arm and lifted it in the air with such violence that Schlump reeled with pain and fell to the floor. Before Schlump could get up to seize the swine by the throat, the clerk already stood in front of him and was writing, "Ready for garrison duty."

Schlump bethought himself of the promise he had made his mother and was determined to get away to the garrison as soon as he could. He felt sure that in the garrison he would be much more certain of not being sent again to the front than if he remained longer in his home town. He was quite sure that when the next inspection came round he would be marked up "Ready for duty"; they would put a gun in his hand and a new pair of shoes on his feet, and he would be sent a third time to the hell-hole. And then the whole thing would be repeated over and over again until he was bumped off: and then it would be the "mass grave." He kept his eyes open and followed the day's orders closely. And luck was with him. One day he heard the sergeant read out, "All men who can speak French report at once to Battalion Headquarters." Schlump didn't wait for a second invitation; he ran up and reported. The Battalion Clerk gave him orders to get ready. He was to leave in three days for Maubeuge, for a post in the Army of Occupation. On a Monday evening, at nine o'clock, the train which carried troops to France stopped at the station. It stopped specially for Schlump, who had received a

railway pass on which was written, "Transport No. 1004: one man with pack, without horse." And then followed a closely printed array of orders and instructions for his guidance on the way. Schlump was to report at every local Occupation office along the line—first in Engelsdorf, near Leipzig; there he would be told at what office he was to stop next and where he would be lodged, and so on.

His mother was happy when he left. For she was terrified to see her boy getting paler and leaner from day to day. She was frightened that he might die of hunger, as her husband had done.

Schlump was pushed into a compartment which was jammed full of soldiers, packs, and ammunition. He was hardly able to shove his pack in. He walked over the soldiers' feet and they swore like bargees. He had given away his helmet, his ammunition pouch, and other superfluous things, for he believed he would never need them again. He traveled uncomfortably through the night and made up his mind to break away as soon as he could and finish the journey in his own style.

The train made its first halt in Engelsdorf, near Leipzig, about three in the morning. A bugler sounded the mess call. They were given soup and a piece of bread. Schlump got his share and went off to report to the local office. Then he came back, took his pack, crept away under the train, ran off through the other side of the station, and wandered out into the night. He figured that the main railroad station of Leipzig

could not be very far off, and he was sure of finding a way of getting to France more comfortably than on the troop transport train. He stumped along through the trodden grass and ran toward a light which he saw in the distance.

It was a little shelter hut. Within he heard the happy voices of men and women, track laborers. "They surely won't give me away," he thought. "I'll be able to pass the night here." And he went in. There were two rooms in the little house; in one of them the workers sat joking with the girls; in the other, three soldiers sat round the stove. He went in to the soldiers. They looked him up and down suspiciously and said nothing. Then, when he had passed the test, one of them said, "All right, buddy, there's room for one more here," and moved over to one side.

They put wood on the fire, and the flames played on their faces and painted dancing forms on the walls. The dark infantryman, who had come back from the trenches in Italy, looked the spirit of mischief. His eyebrows shot up on his forehead toward the corners where his hair began. He rummaged in his bag and brought out his water-bottle, which he passed round. It contained strong rum, which warmed the blood and woke them to new life.

"Well, buddy, how about you?" said the broad-shouldered artilleryman next to Schlump to the dark-faced infantryman. "I guess this wasn't the exact address written on your railway pass, either."

The soldier did not answer at once. He settled himself more comfortably and said slowly, "We've all got time: lots of it. I'll tell you the story later, and I'll begin at the beginning." He stretched himself again, and then he began.

"I'm an artist by profession. Don't laugh, either. If you want to be an artist you've got to sweat for it, you've got to have endurance, and you've got to live straight. Before the war we used to travel from one little town to another, and just before the war broke out we came to a place called Schilda. I guess you know the place: it's where the real Gothamites come from. We had our tent up in no time, the evening came, and the crowds streamed in. I had a real original act; I came on as a half-naked nigger, went all the way up the pole with a chair, put the chair right in the middle of the wire, and sat down on top of it. I squatted with my feet on the chair. And then I played the guitar and sang nigger songs. I knew all the snappy songs, the way the crowd likes them. When the performance was over I stood up at the entrance to the tent, still pretending to be a nigger, of course, and watched the crowds. And all at once I saw a fine, snappy young woman coming along, red cheeks, and eyes—boy! She was a beauty. She stopped right in front of me and shoved a note secretly into my hand. I went to the light and read it: 'Come tonight: I'm all alone.' And then the street and the number. Well, boys, I don't have to tell you I took those orders and obeyed them like a regular soldier.

"Well, the wonderful night passed, we broke up camp, and we were ready to put the tents up again in Torgau, as usual. And then: the war! I had to report on the first day of mobilization.

"We were sent to France. I couldn't forget that lovely girl, Anne. Christmas came; the war wasn't over, the way we expected it to be. We got our first replacements. There was a man amongst them who came from Schilda! I asked him if he knew Anne, Anne Birnhaupt, that was her name. 'Why, surest thing,' he said, 'it's my wife!' I thought I'd drop. Then the fellow looked at me—bow-legged, but a decent sort, not too brainy, either—a regular Gothamite, that's what I thought. 'How the devil did she come to take a guy like that?' I asked myself. 'This doesn't look straight to me.' And I made up my mind to become friendly with the man. It went all right. And before long I got his love story out of him. He got to know Anne about three months after the war broke out. She was very nice to him, so they had a war wedding so she could get his allowance. Her parents were dead, and she couldn't find any work. After fourteen days she whispered in his ear that their union had been blessed. He was very proud. Another fortnight passed and she came home one day all excited and frightened and half dead. 'Franz,' she cried, 'Franz!' and she sat down on a chair and began to weep and wail till poor Franz got pale all over. He stood in front of her, bow-legged, good-natured, and didn't know what to do with her. He asked her over and over

again what the matter was, took hold of her apron, but she shook him off and said, 'Leave me alone,' and kept on weeping. At last it came out, in the midst of her tears and sobs: she had run round the corner, past the cigar shop, to get him his beer, and when she saw the wooden nigger in the window of the shop with the big cigar stuck in his white teeth she got an awful fright: 'Oh, Franz, Franz, suppose it's had an effect on me! Suppose I get a nigger baby! I'll drown myself!' But Franz answered her that even if it happened he wouldn't be angry with her, because it wasn't her fault. But he wanted to tell the cigar-store owner to take that wooden nigger out of the window so that the women shouldn't be frightened.

"Then he was called up. He had already been in active service once and had been put on railway duty. But now he was in the Argonne. A quarter of a year passed, and he came to me proudly with a letter from Anne: 'Here,' he said. 'A boy. And it isn't a nigger either. Only black hair and dark eyes.' Franz was as blond as a fresh roll and had blue eyes; Anne too had beautiful golden hair and sky-blue eyes.

"One of the boys in our squad said, 'Well, Franz, how long have you been married?' And Franz began to reckon on his fingers. 'Four and a half months,' he said. 'It's just five months ago we got to know each other, in a restaurant. Fourteen days later we got married.' 'And what does the youngster weigh? Ten pounds?' And all of us burst out laughing, and Franz stood there, mad as could be, and couldn't understand

what was the matter. They explained everything to him, and he wrote a regular letter to Anne; he was raving mad; he wanted to murder her. But after a week he got an answer:

"Dear Franz:

"Don't you let your buddies fool you like that. They played a mean joke on you, and your poor wife has to suffer for it. What you say is quite right; you're supposed to be married nine months before you have a baby. And that's exactly how it is with us. I've been married four and a half months; and so have you. Add it up and how much does that make? Didn't we get married together? Don't pay any attention to your buddies. Wait till you can get back at them—you'll get your chance.

"She was a fine kid. Franz came secretly to me and showed me the letter. I told him, 'Your wife is quite right. Don't take the other men seriously—they're a bunch of toughs. Write your wife a nice friendly letter and ask her forgiveness.'

"A year later I got a leave of absence and saw his wife and his son—or rather my son. He was a dark, lively little rascal: you ought to see him. He's going to be an artist—I can tell you that right now.

"And then came those fierce battles near Verdun, and Franz and I stuck it out together. I got wounded once, and Franz brought me out of it. Well, boys, you know how it is. I shared my bread with him and got him out of all sorts of trouble. We became real war

buddies. And one day I told him the whole story. We were lying together in a shell-hole and I couldn't see his face. It took quite a long time for him to answer: then he said, 'Fritz,' he said, 'we've become regular war buddies, and we might die any moment. If one of us remains alive, he'll be the man to have Anne.' I didn't think him capable of such a thing. And now don't let any one tell me that boy was thick. He was a bit slow, all right; but he certainly wasn't thick.

"Well, Anne has two husbands now, and we manage all right. And that's the way it's going to remain, and it's no one's business except ours. A couple of weeks ago she wrote that they haven't got anything to eat—she and our boy Friedrich. So Franz and I saved up, and we bought whatever we could in the canteen, and I managed to steal something out of the kitchen while I was peeling potatoes. And I beat it from the company and went A.W.O.L. And perhaps Franz'll manage to come, too, and then the whole family'll be together."

Schlump ate his bread and listened to the conversation. The three men had been on every possible front: one of them in Finland, another in Italy, and the artilleryman, who began to speak now, in Flanders.

"I went off to the front in 1914, with the National Guard, and now it's November 10, 1917. I haven't had a single leave of absence in all that time. We had nothing but peasants in our battery, and when harvest

time came they had to go home. They had to cart the manure, and the Q.M.C. captain let them go because they could bring him whole hams." The speaker paused a while, then added bitterly, "As if we didn't have wives, just like the others."

He filled his pipe and lit up.

"I've gone A.W.O.L., too. My wife writes me she has nothing to eat, and the two little ones never get their fill." He spoke slowly, and stopped to think after every sentence.

"And then there are the two big ones. It's really for them that I beat it. I'm a trained brewer, and I always got a good day's pay for a good day's work. But the young fellow earns a sight more than I ever did. He went from school right to the factory, to turn shells. And he never got any training at that. He's the boss of the house now—won't listen to a word from my wife. My wife wrote me that a few days ago he lit his cigarette with one-mark notes. My wife gave him one over the ear—and he all but struck her back. And now he doesn't come into the house at all. He spends his nights in the barroom or else he's sleeping with a war widow. I tell you, that woman is just ruining my boy. It's time for me to get home and dust his pants for him—so he can know it's wartime. And then there's Marianne, my girl—she's the oldest: thirteen years old when I saw her last. She used to be a pretty, well-behaved kid, and I loved her. And now? Well, now she's hanging around with a Polish Jew—one of the men they let out of the civilian concentration

camp. He's an interpreter, he translates for the Russians and the Poles in the court, and in between he deals in food and clothes and everything else he can lay his hands on. And he bought the kid body and soul with a pair of silk stockings. And now she wants to go and live with him, and never come home, just like her brother." The guardsman was silent for a long time. Then he added, "I'll spend four weeks at home and clean things up. The little ones will be afraid of me—they don't know me any more. Then I'll go back to my battery. They can do what they like with me."

Schlump was tired out, and he wrapped himself in his blanket. He shoved his pack under his neck and while sleep stole over him he listened to what the Q.M.C. soldier had to say.

"Last autumn we were in the Ukraine. First we had to travel a long distance by train. Then we got off and we had to travel fourteen days by pony along those miserable roads to the east. At night we used to hobble the ponies and sleep in the carts. Then at last a couple of villages came in sight. But you can't imagine how amazed we were! It was just as if we were back home, in Hesse. Such neat, pretty houses, clean, with gardens in front. And when we got there and spoke to the people they all answered us in German, the friendliest way. And how happy they were to see us!

"We were divided out among the farms and got our first decent rest. The peasants were without horses;

they were taken away during the mobilization; and we had to help in the work. The man I was quartered with was called Linsenmayer, and besides his beautiful farm he had a daughter called Marie. The three of us worked together on the harvest. And what a worker that girl was! I always kept close to her. When she was cutting, or when she was handing up one of the sheaves, she was worth watching. And what a pair of eyes she had! I always had to think of our horse, Liese: she had the same kind of beautiful brown eyes, and was just as slender and graceful when she galloped. We used to compete with each other in the work, and then when vespers came we would sit down together and drink our wine out of the same pitcher.

"Well, I suppose you can guess it yourselves: it happened one day, all right—neither of us knew exactly how. The soldiers stayed there half a year. And toward the end of the time Marie couldn't keep it a secret any more. You just saw it. She was ashamed and wouldn't leave the house any more. And her mother cursed and scolded and looked murder at me. It was a real funeral: the poor kid cried her eyes out, but it was too late. . . .

"In the spring we got our marching orders. You can imagine the farewell scene. She hung round my neck and wouldn't let go; she cried till I thought her heart would break. And I left her there, standing at the hedge, looking after me out of her big eyes.

"We went back to the railroad and entrained again. The journey seemed to last for years. Back to Galicia,

through Poland and up to Finland. I never heard from her again. But I couldn't forget her. At night I used to wake up in a fright and see her big eyes staring at me, so I couldn't fall asleep again.

"In October I got my first leave and went home. But even at home I couldn't forget her, and I still saw her eyes.

"I went to the savings bank, secretly, and drew out all my savings. And when my leave was over I packed my civilian clothes in my bag and said good-by to my family. When I got to the next station I wrote back and told them everything.

"She must have had her baby by now. I got off the train at Leipzig. One of the railroad men told me that trains sometimes go from Leipzig down to Galicia. I'm not going back to my outfit. First I'm going to go down to Roumania or Galicia. There I'll get me a horse and put my civilian clothes on. Then I'll ride away and look for my Marie. And I don't care if it takes me ten years to do it—I'm going to find her."

Schlump had fallen asleep by now, and the others too were looking for their blankets and putting their packs under their heads for pillows. The last man put the candle out, and in a few minutes they were all snoring in the shelter near the rails.

When Schlump awoke in the morning, the only man left was the Q.M.C. soldier. He was still sitting in his corner, eating for all he was worth. Schlump slipped out of his blanket, rolled it up, and tied it to the pack.

He went out of the shelter. At that instant a figure stepped across the rails: a man in railway uniform, with officer's badges on his shoulders. Schlump started back in terror: "You're in for it now!" he thought. The man with the shoulder pieces called to him, "Where do you want to go?" Schlump tried the oldest and most successful army trick: he put on a stupid look and stared back. "Aren't you the man who was going to Maubeuge—you were supposed to leave with the troops last night?" Schlump began to have a sinking feeling. He tried to look still more stupid, and answered, in unmilitary language, "Say, how do you know all that?" He didn't take the man for an officer, in spite of the shoulder pieces. "You don't have to be scared of me," the other said, good-humoredly. "I won't do you any dirt. I saw your regimental number on your shoulder. But tell me where you're trying to go." Schlump told him that the journey with the soldiers had been intolerably long and dull. "I wanted to get to France sooner, and now I'm going across to the railroad station." The other told him that there was a close guard round the station, and he would find it impossible to get through and board a train. The train for him to get, if he could, was the one leaving at ten o'clock for Halle. Then, at midnight, he would get a direct connection to Liège. Then the two men spoke about the war and about the hunger that reigned at home. And the railway man told him that last week they had wanted to strike because they were put on double duty and they didn't get enough pay—not as

much as the munitions workers, by a long way. But the first attempt they made was nipped in the bud. The very morning when they were supposed to go on strike they got their mobilization orders, every man. They got their uniforms, they were put under martial law, and their pay was even less than before: all they got now was their soldier's pay. As a higher official he himself wasn't so badly off, but the workers were in a rage. And if the war didn't end before very long, the authorities would have to give way, whether they wanted to or not. "If that's the kind of talk you hear from a higher official . . ." Schlump thought to himself. He asked the other about the way, and then the two parted.

With his pack strapped on, Schlump marched steadily through the desolate suburbs toward the inner city until he came to the main railroad station. Very carefully he avoided the patrols marching to and fro in front of the blocked streets. He managed to find his way at last into the crowd which pressed toward the entrance to the tracks. Soon there was a long line behind him, pushing him forward. And Schlump helped to push; when the man in front turned round with a look of rage, Schlump also turned and bestowed the same look on the man behind. At last the girl in the conductor's uniform, who sat in the box, became frightened of the mob, and when Schlump presented himself, she let him through. For Schlump had begun to unroll his vast transportation orders, which he had made up into a small bundle. Schlump ran for the

train, put down his pack, and squeezed himself into an obscure corner. In a few minutes the train pulled out, and Schlump could emerge again.

They were just pulling out of Schkeuditz when the door opened and the military control came in: "Tickets! Passes!" Schlump handed over his transportation orders and looked his most innocent. The sergeant—there were two armed soldiers standing behind him—unrolled the orders and read them through carefully. He turned them over several times, and finally he said, "This isn't a railway ticket. Where's your leave pass?"

"I don't know," said Schlump. "They didn't give me any."

The sergeant put the transportation orders into his pocket. "Report at Halle," he said. Then he went on. The two elderly ladies in the opposite seat looked at him out of big, reproachful eyes. Schlump grinned at them and then looked out of the window.

At Halle he took his pack and left the train. At the head of the steps leading under the track to the station he saw the sergeant, with a huge sheaf of red and white tickets in his hand. A crowd of soldiers stood around him. Schlump pressed in toward the sergeant from the side near the steps. There, among all the tickets, he saw his own transportation slip dangling. It hung down far below the others, it was so long. Schlump stretched out his left hand and took a firm hold on the railing of the steps. Then he made a quick snatch with his right hand, grabbed his transportation

orders, and ran like mad down the steps. He heard voices raised behind him, but he was already round the corner, running up the steps leading to the other side. There he saw a sign, "Military Control." He entered: it would be the last place where they would look for him. Fortunately there was a whole crowd of soldiers inside, for he hadn't thought yet of what to say. In one corner he saw a heap of military packs. He asked one of the clerks whether it was allowed to check one's pack here. The clerk nodded and gave him a red check. Schlump took it and left the office. With the red check he could also pass through the guard, and here he was in Halle, free and unmolested.

Schlump wandered aimlessly through the angular streets of the city of Halle. The icy wind carried the sharp coal-dust into his eyes, and he was beginning to freeze. He felt the pangs of hunger, too, and went into a café. The girl gave him coffee and a tart. The tart consisted of a white, creamy substance, spread heavily on a thin wafer. The coffee tasted bitter, and on the saucer lay a tiny, tiny fragment of saccharine. Schlump felt as though his stomach had been deliberately insulted by this nourishment: he felt just as hungry as before. In fact, the feeling of emptiness there tormented him more than before, so that he began to cast about for relief.

At the next table sat two girls who had taken a liking to the young soldier from the first moment. They threw friendly glances at him and soon gave

him an opportunity to open a conversation. And before many minutes had passed Schlump was sitting at their table and they were feeding him with chocolates which they conjured out of their hand bags. They worked in the chocolate factory, and this was their day off. They remained sitting there till the evening, and then the party broke up. The dark girl who sat next to Schlump —the one with the pretty teeth and snub nose—invited him to her home. Schlump accepted the invitation promptly and followed her to her room. She had a sweet little nest, a warm stove and a splendid bed. And she fed her soldier with everything his heart desired. He asked her in amazement where she got all these good things. For she heaped up his plate with roast ham and fried eggs, and the lovely yellow yolk with its fringe of white was as delicious to look at as to eat. And then, with her delicate hands, she poured out for him a cup of real cocoa which had been made in milk and had never been insulted by contact with water. "You can't get anything for money," the dear child said. "But when you've got something to offer in exchange, like chocolate, for instance, you can get everything you want." After this magnificent supper she switched off the light and lit a little lamp on the stove, and its mild, tender light fell on the broad, low bed.

They remained together two days in this paradise. And then Schlump had to bethink himself of the journey that still lay before him. Late in the night the friendly child with the thick black hair brought him

to the station. She had bought him a bouquet of costly flowers, and she cried bitterly when the parting moment came.

Schlump called for his pack and then climbed into the train for Brussels. Two guardsmen sat in the same compartment, both of them asleep. Schlump unstrapped his blanket and rolled himself up and before long fell asleep to the unceasing, beating rhythm of the wheels.

The train was just pulling into Liège when he awoke. It was midday, and no military control had come to disturb him. Schlump climbed down and made his way into the waiting-room, which was jammed to the corners with soldiers in field-gray uniform. He would have to wait until the evening before he could continue his journey to Charleroi. He checked his pack, lest any one should make off with it, but they also made him give up his hat, so that he couldn't get out into the town. Then he sat down at a table. Next him sat a couple of sturdy Pomeranian guardsmen, cutting thick strips from a huge ham. They had in their hands heavy slices of bread, covered to a depth of half an inch with butter and cream cheese. They ate like animals, fiercely and at length, quite undisturbed by the envious glances of the other soldiers, who stood around, making bitter remarks from time to time. When a couple of hours had passed they got up and went away, their muscular jaws still at work. When they were gone a little runt of a fellow sat down next to Schlump: he was neatly dressed,

with a high collar; and he had a jolly-looking mouth. He soon entered into conversation with Schlump and told him that in civilian life he was a merchant and that now he was stationed permanently at the Dutch frontier, where he made purchases for the canteen; and moreover there were great opportunities for making something on the side. Schlump was eager to know what these opportunities were and told the other that he too was a merchant and that he was now going to be attached to headquarters at Maubeuge. "Man alive!" the merchant exclaimed. "It couldn't fit in better! Maubeuge is a real city, and there must be splendid opportunities for business. We're the government here in Belgium, and you can buy anything you like. I import soap from Holland. Meubeuge is a military station, and things there are just as bad as in Germany. We could do things together, you and I." And he explained in great detail how they could set up in the profiteering game. He had to come once a week to Liège, and he could always bring along a couple of cases of soap. Schlump could then pick up the cases, or have them picked up by somebody else, against cash, of course. The best thing was to have one of the railway employees do it. And on top of their profit they would have the advantage of the free freight from the Dutch border to Liège. The railway employee would get ten marks for every case. Of course it would be Schlump's end of the job to find a canteen which would buy the goods. Schlump was astounded by the curious internal war which was being

carried on, but he gave no sign of astonishment and agreed to everything and promised to carry out instructions.

And then his gay companion said, "Listen, boy, there's nothing doing here: you can't get a drink for love or money. You come into the town with me—I know every corner of it."

"I haven't got my hat," Schlump answered.

"That doesn't matter. If the guard stops you I'll say you're sick and I'm taking you up for medical examination."

They went out. The guard, a decent Bavarian, was easily fooled. They went from canteen to canteen, and at last his new-found comrade had to leave him: his parting words were, "You can find your way back yourself. Only don't let them catch you without a cap." Schlump took the street car, and when he saw an officer getting on at one end, he slipped over to the other. He rode through the streets of the beautiful city, staring with amazement at the buildings and at the beautiful bridges. He rode past the meat shops, which were filled with meat and pies, and he thought of his home town, where there was nothing to be seen in the meat shops except rose-tinted, lean pork, with the butcher standing by, sharpening his bronze cleaver; where the bare hooks hung sadly on their bars; where the women with careworn faces crowded round the doors, their meat tickets in their hands. He rode by bakeries, from which issued the pleasant odor of fresh white bread, and thought of his home, where

his mother divided with painful care the black bread into which was baked potato meal and ground potato skin. At last he came to the railroad station. The guard had been changed: Prussians stood there now —not the kind of men you could fool so easily. But he managed to find a good place where he could clamber over the hedge, and at six o'clock in the evening, when it was already dark, he climbed into the train for Charleroi. In Charleroi he had to pass the whole night in the waiting-room, which, like that at Liège, was filled with soldiers who slept on the tables or under the benches. In the morning he continued his journey and reached Maubeuge, where he reported at local Occupation headquarters.

Schlump was imediately attached to the head office: he was to be trained to take complete charge of one of the local offices. At first he had to bring the mail and perform other important jobs. One day the captain, who in civilian life was a director in the Imperial Bank, sent him with a French wagoner to Haumont. Schlump sat high up on the driver's seat and rode along through the valley of Maubeuge toward Sous-le-Bois, till finally he saw the town of Haumont lying in the distance. He entered into conversation with the Fenchman and asked him what there was in the bags which he was taking to Haumont.

"Why, sugar, of course," the black-whiskered Frenchman answered, astonished. "Sugar for the commissariat."

Haumont was the distributing center for the civilian population. Schlump wondered why nobody had told him that the money exchange office also dealt in sugar. But the Frenchman only clucked with his tongue and winked meaningfully. "Oho," thought Schlump, and he said nothing more. As the days and weeks went by he learned that every man who wasn't a complete idiot was doing business of one sort or another.

At the end of a month, shortly before Christmas, he was transferred to the local exchange office of Maubeuge, which was next door to the head exchange office. He saw very little of the director of this office; he was always away on a journey, either to Brussels, or to Cologne, or to Berlin. But most of the time nobody knew where he was. He was extremely reserved in his manner; he had a fine uniform and a marvelous fur coat, though he was only an ordinary soldier, just like Schlump.

The actual work in the office was done by another man, who had the pretty name of Schabkow; he looked like a tadpole, with his big round head and his watery eyes. His flat nose was turned up so far that if you were taller than he you could look comfortably down his nostrils. He came from Breslau originally, but his home was in Berlin, and when he laughed he opened a tremendous mouth and showed irregular rows of tiny pointed teeth. He spoke little, and sometimes he told jokes which Schlump had to think over a long time. For these jokes all came from the stock market, and they had been thought up by men who

knew nothing so well as the weaknesses of human beings. Schabkow was incredibly lucky with the women, although he was as ugly as a toad. When he went to the barber's shop in the market place, he was always attended to by the beautiful young wife of the barber and by her niece, a pretty, fresh young girl. There wasn't a man in the garrison who hadn't had his face soaped and rubbed by these tender hands: but not a single one of them made good. Schabkow was the only success—and they quarreled bitterly for the honor of scraping this toad's beard.

One day—it was in the first week of the year 1918—Schabkow came into the office radiant with joy. He invited Schlump to come to his quarters that evening, and whispered to him that there would be champagne and oysters and that he was to prove himself worthy of the honor. Schlump was astounded by the comfortable quarters occupied by Schabkow, and noted before long that the skillful hand of some woman had been at work here. Schabkow had had a marvelous supper prepared, with all the delicacies which at that time could be obtained from Brussels. Soon the toad became jolly, the champagne was producing its effect, and he began to babble: "Listen, youngster: I didn't always have it so easy. I've known a great deal of starvation in my time"—he was about thirty years old—"and once I traveled without money and on an empty stomach through Switzerland. At that time your mother still had to hold you up so you wouldn't wet your shoes when you made water. I

went through the battles of the Somme, and I got a terrible wound in my stomach. I've gone through many schools, youngster, but I always thought of my father, who taught me more than all my teachers put together. I was fourteen years old, and the next day I was supposed to become an apprentice to a Jew who had just come from Galicia. My father—he's dead now—was a barber, but he had a houseful of kids—I was the tenth—and he couldn't get anywhere." He drank the champagne straight from the bottle. "You don't seem to be such a stupid. Boy, I'm going to reveal to you the golden advice which my father gave me." He paused, ate another dozen oysters, and took a deep pull at the champagne. "There's only one thing, my son, which you must respect: and that's money. It's better for you to come into this world with a big bag of money than with a big brain. But the man that's born poor and dies rich dies in honor. For he is praised and honored, and the poor whisper his name with reverence. And now listen, and I'll tell you the secret. Know that all men are pitiful things: they lick the hand that gives them their bread. To give is better than to take. Therefore see to it that you become a giver in good time. Be afraid of no one. If they are poor, they are all worse than you. When you meet a man, don't trust him: observe him closely, but don't ever let him see that you know him. Always act as if you had no feelings. For death means nothing. Good and evil, too, are matters of feeling. Save up your feelings for your jolly evenings. Only the

poor have pangs of conscience: and that is why they are sold and betrayed.

"When you need a man, flatter him decently and modestly, but never forget that you are lying all the time. . . . Is there a man who stands in your way? Turn to his wife. Flatter her openly and clearly, and look her straight in the eyes. Notice that every woman, even an ugly one, has one part of her that is beautiful. Find out that part. And tell her about it. She'll know for sure that you're not lying, and she'll be eternally grateful to you. She'll remove every obstacle from your path, and you'll become rich.

"And when you've acquired money, don't forget to be pious and give to the poor."

That evening Schlump returned to his quarters blind drunk.

It was not long before Schlump too began to do business. He had struck up with a Frenchman who sold him bedsheets. The good man went round telling his countrymen that the Germans were on the point of requisitioning all bedclothes because they were building new hospitals, and the poor people sold him their last possessions for a song. He brought the sheets to Schlump by the dozen, and Schlump passed them on to the head waiter of the dining-car on the train which went daily between headquarters and Cologne. They were heavy sheets specially woven for the French beds, in which no one ever sleeps alone. First of all they had to be washed. The head waiter

gave Schlump eight marks for every sheet, and then also had to tip the railway official who was go-between. The latter hid the sheets under the seats in the first and second class, where the officers sat in their red striped trousers, and afterwards passed them on to the big German supply houses. There the sheets were dyed and made into dresses, and our pretty girls ran around proudly in their new colors, never suspecting how much the dresses they wore had already seen of love.

Schlump also dealt in whiskey, which he got out of the canteen in the barracks and which the civilians paid higher prices for. The whiskey was brought to him in the evening, against cash payment, and the next morning it was called for, also against cash payment. Thus he gradually piled up some money and lived a jolly life. He bought flour and sugar and butter and every week sent home a package. But one day the big chance came—he was on the point of becoming a rich man with a single deal.

During this time Schlump had been transferred to Haumont, where he took charge of the exchange office. One day a soldier came in who had just left the trenches. He unstrapped his pack and brought out a thick, heavy bundle. Carefully and with much ado, he undid it and laid on the table a number of neat, pretty packages, each of which contained a pile of brand-new notes—the paper money of French cities. He looked straight into Schlump's eyes, hit himself on the thigh, and with a loud, triumphant laugh, said,

"I found that. Give me half a million German marks for it and you can have it." Schlump was rigid with amazement. He looked at the notes: they were actually absolutely new municipal notes, such as the French cities issued for the payment of workers and purchase of supplies. Schlump took up one of the notes—it represented five francs—and tested it. There wasn't the slightest doubt about it—it was genuine paper money. But suddenly he laid the money down again and said, "Buddy, you can take the whole bunch back: you won't get a mark for it."

"Are you crazy?" cried the other. "Why won't they give me a mark for it?"

"Because," said Schlump, "they don't carry the signature of the Mayor and the stamp of the Mayor's office. Perhaps they forgot this paper when they had to leave the city. The stuff is worth nothing—you can give it to the garbage man." The soldier picked up a note, looked at it closely, and threw it down. Then he picked up his pack, hitched it on, and went out. But at the door he turned for an instant and shouted, "You're nothing but a gang of thieves!"

Schlump picked up the note, packed everything together, and carried it into his room. He began to think the whole thing over. There was surely something in it just the same. As a matter of fact there was lots of paper money in circulation from cities which had long since been wiped out. Schlump thought and thought and thought. In the evening he went over to his friend who in civilian life had been an architect

and who was now in charge of the civilian laborers who were laying down the new track.

And in the night they set to work feverishly. His friend cut out a stamp and Schlump worked on the facsimile of the mayor's signature. They tried it a hundred times, and at last they got it right.

The next night they sat stamping notes until the perspiration streamed from them.

The half million was all stamped and provided with a signature.

But how were they to put the money in circulation? Schlump was to call as much German money into his exchange office as possible and spend French money, but he would keep the counterfeit money.

It would have been dangerous to spend half a million in false money, and new notes at that. His friend had an idea. Every week he had to pay the workers who were employed on the railroad. The payments were made in municipal money. In the past he had come more than once to Schlump's office with German money and exchanged it against local municipal money. Well, Schlump was to give him the counterfeit money, and he would bring good German marks for it.

At first the plan worked to schedule. They repeated the trick a couple of times. Until one day an order appeared at headquarters, stating that there was a lot of false money in circulation: the paper was authentic, but the signature had been forged.

Thereupon the two of them became frightened.

They destroyed the rest of the money and kept quiet.

A couple of days later an M.P. turned up, searched the place thoroughly, and found nothing. He accepted a drink from Schlump and disappeared.

Then the matter was forgotten. Each of them now had ten thousand marks in his pocket. Schlump put a couple of hundred-mark notes in a letter and sent them home. The rest he sewed into his coat.

Schlump often stood at the door of his office and observed the life of the little town. He saw the well-groomed, well-fed headquarters officers passing with their white spats on their feet, saluting with elegant and careless gestures the poor wounded soldiers who kept modestly to the wall. And Schlump thought of the last words he had heard from his teacher at home, who had been through the war of 1870. They were taking the white-bearded old man from his peaceful life because of the shortage of man-power. At the close of his last lesson, just before he dismissed the class, the old man had said, "Boys, I don't think any of you will have to go to this war. But remember one thing: you are destined to become the leaders of the German people. To be a leader means to be a model. If the leaders are active and industrious, the entire people is active and industrious. And then the road leads upward. The weal and woe of a people depends on the way of life of its leaders. An enormous responsibility rests on the shoulders of the leader. And woe to the people whose leaders refuse to make

greater sacrifices than the rank and file. Just as the cavalryman must always think first of his horse, so the first care of the leader must be the men who look up to him. The leader must also lead in bearing hunger and privation, and then his troops will die for him." The old man died soon after. Remembering these words Schlump felt uncomfortable, and he began to whistle a soldier's song.

The penal company came marching by, soldiers of the second class without buttons in their caps. They were pale, neglected, and their depression was written on their faces. "*Kamerad, Kamerad,* a cigarette," they begged in passing by. As always, Schlump threw them a few. One of the boys had attracted his attention, a boy with a pale, innocent face. "How did he get in there?" Schlump wondered. The poor devils had to work hard, and they got poor food and no pay. Every evening they returned to their barracks, exhausted and filthy, without overcoats and in shabby uniforms. The pale boy always marched at the side where he would pass near Schlump. And Schlump would often thrust a piece of bread or sausage into his hand. He would have liked to know what this poor boy had on his conscience.

One day Schlump saw him standing opposite his office, at the door of the medical station: he was a pitiful sight, half broken and frozen. Near him stood a corporal, with bayonet fixed and full cartridge pouch. Schlump went across to the boy and began a conversation with him. The pale boy looked grateful,

but he hardly answered. Schlump gave him some cigarettes and tried to make friends. Gradually the boy warmed to him and told him of his misfortune. The words came out slowly, and sometimes he stammered, and sometimes Schlump had to finish the sentence for him. But he understood him, for the brown eyes spoke more eloquently than the helpless tongue.

And this is what he learned:

"I was born in 1900 in a small village in the County of Brandenburg. I never knew my mother, and my father died a couple of years ago. He apprenticed me to a shoemaker, who treated me very nicely. We worked together and talked about the people who passed along the street outside. Every morning the schoolmaster's daughter passed that way to get milk from the farm. She was of the same age as myself, and we had been to school together. But she was always in the front row, and I was in the last, and we seldom spoke to each other. I could only look across the class at her back. I always wanted to sit for once by her side, so every Sunday I went to church, but I never had the courage to go near her, and I always took my seat in the last row, and from there I could see her braids hanging down her back. When she passed our door in the morning, I was happy for the rest of the day. 'Good morning, Ilse,' I said (but no one ever heard me say it); 'I hope you've slept well. I dreamed about you last night. I dreamed that the two of us were angels and we played together.' One day she brought us her shoes. I put soles on them.

Buddy, you just wouldn't believe what pretty shoes she had. In the evening I took the shoes into my room and put them on the dresser, and I sat down in front of them and spoke with them. We played together like children. In the morning I took them down so that my master didn't notice anything, and then she herself came to the shop to call for them. 'The boy put the soles on,' my master said. She looked at me and laughed and said something. I didn't understand what she said, I couldn't utter a word, there was a roaring in my ears as if I were standing in the mill. And then she was outside, and the shoes too. That night I sat alone in my room and I cried like a baby. Buddy, you mustn't laugh at me; I wasn't a coward in any other way. I used to go in the woods in the middle of the night without being afraid, and I would have done anything in the world for her. Then the winter came, and I was mustered in and they assigned me to the infantry. But we weren't called up for service yet.

"I kept on working at my trade, and one day the schoolmaster's servant girl came and brought Ilse's shoes; she said that Ilse was going to the city to live there, and she wanted the buckles of her shoes set higher up. I felt as if some one had struck me. Ilse was going to the city! She would never again pass our door, and she would give her shoes to some other cobbler! We both worked on the shoes so as to get the job done quickly. That night I took the shoes up into my room. I couldn't sleep a wink. The next morning they were to come for the shoes and in the afternoon she

was to be taken to the city by the peasant. Buddy, no one in the world will ever know what I went through that night.

"At four o'clock I got up; it was pitch-dark and the windows were frozen over. I packed my things together—Ilse's shoes first, at the bottom of the bag—and I stole out, without a word to any one.

"I took my military papers with me.

"Wherever I went I found work easily, because there were so few people left. I wandered all through Thuringia. Sometimes I would unpack the shoes and set them down in front of me. I used to kiss them; you can't imagine, buddy, how I loved those shoes. And then suddenly I thought of my master and of the trick I had played on him. He must have looked for those shoes high and low. I packed the shoes in again right at the bottom of the bag. I promised myself never to take them out again. I wandered as far as Hesse, and there I stopped with one master for a whole quarter of a year. The shoes lay in my bundle, right at the bottom: I never took them out.

"But they were always in my mind. I thought of our village, and I thought of Ilse as she used to pass by our door. I saw the schoolmaster's house, and I saw the maid going to bring Ilse from the city, because it was the holidays. Buddy, I just couldn't stand it any more. I ran away again, through the nights and the mist, the shoes in my hand. I begged my way along the roads, and after weeks, half broken and half starved, I came out on the hill above the fir wood,

and I couldn't trust myself to go down into the village.

"And in the night I knocked at the door of my master's house, the shoes in my hand.

"The storm was raging through the pine trees till they howled and was lashing the limes and whipping the withered leaves in my face when I knocked at my master's door. His wife opened the door—you can imagine, buddy, how amazed she was when she saw me standing there. She let me in; I stepped up to the table and put the stolen shoes on it and looked at my master. He took the shoes in his hand, turned them over, and looked at them; then he put them down again. 'Go to bed,' he said. I stole up to my room.

"And then I worked again, buddy; I worked as hard as I could, so that my master was good to me again.

"She had come back from the city, and every morning she passed our door again when she went to the farm for the milk. My master's wife had taken the shoes back, and everything was as it used to be.

"November came, and one day the letter-carrier brought me the red ticket. I was called up to the infantry. I wanted to be a soldier, and I was glad now. I ordered myself a soldier's box from the carpenter, and my master's wife knitted a pair of stockings for me.

"But when the night came I couldn't sleep. I had to keep thinking of Ilse. She would remain in the village, and every morning she would go to the farm for

milk, and I would never see her again, I would never see her again. And I had nothing from her, not a single thing to remember her by. And I had to go to the war, and perhaps I would never return. The day came nearer and nearer, and I became more and more restless, more and more miserable.

"It was the last night. The next morning I would have to be gone. That night, that miserable night, it was pitch-dark. I sat on my bed and listened, listened toward the schoolmaster's house. Perhaps a fire would break out in the schoolmaster's house and I could save her. Then I would have seen her again. I worried myself sick with the craziest ideas. Suddenly I gave way completely. I dressed myself and stole out. A fierce wind was blowing, and it drove through my hair. It drove me across the village. I stole round the schoolmaster's house, round and round, I don't know how many times. I heard the clock in the tower sounding through the storm, but I didn't know what hour it sounded. I stood at the window and listened; perhaps she was speaking in her dreams. But it was madness; the trees were shaking with a sound like thunder, and the slates were rattling on the roof.

"I tried one of the ground windows—and it opened! I climbed in. Once inside, I stood still and held my breath a long, long time. Then I stole forward. Suddenly I hit something with my foot. I stopped, terrified, and stood stone-still again. It was a pair of shoes. I kneel down and I feel with my hands. Her shoes! My shoes, the shoes I had run away

with! I cried for joy. I kissed them, buddy; don't laugh at me; I kissed them. How long did I remain kneeling there? I don't know. I wanted to take them away with me for a keepsake. But I had already stolen once, and I thought of my master. I put the shoes down again. And then I picked them up again and began to feel my way out. But then I saw my master before me, and I turned back; I kneeled down, and I was just going to put the shoes back when suddenly the door opened: a white figure appeared carrying a light! It was she! I go crazy with fear, I spring up, she screams out, I hear something crash. I don't know, buddy, how I got out of that house. I ran like a madman, kept on running, away into the fields.

"In the morning I noticed that my face and my fingers were bleeding; I must have jumped through a window. I wandered around, buddy, I don't know how many days and nights. One morning, while it was still dark, I came back to the village, and by the hedge of her house I collapsed, and I slept. The policeman found me and woke me up. I was led back and brought to the city. To the prison. They court-martialed me. The schoolmaster sat there with his wife, all dressed in black. My master and his wife were there. None of them would look at me. The judge in the military uniform stood up. He read out from something, a long, long document. I didn't understand what he was saying: except for one thing. Ilse had a hole in her head! I couldn't make anything out. They asked me again and again. I had nothing to say. And then they

led me away. Now I'm here. Buddy, I didn't kill Ilse. I didn't kill her."

Schlump asked him how many years he got. He didn't know. Schlump gave him everything he had in his pockets and went back across the street to his office.

Winter passed, the war became bloodier and bloodier, and peace would not come. But hope rose again: there was no more shooting on the eastern front. The Russians were done for in spite of their vast masses of soldiery. And now the troops came rolling in from the east. One train after another. The artillery was already unloaded at the frontier, and it was being pulled along the great roads toward the western front. The headquarters troops began to waken; many among them had gone to the front in 1914, almost four years before. They remembered those first days, and something akin to enthusiasm stirred in their disillusioned and weary hearts. There was talk of armies in numbers that were incredible: they said the Seventeenth Army had arrived, the Eighteenth was to relieve the Second, and so on. Sometimes when Schlump awoke in the night he heard a dull thunder, a rolling sound, from the heights surrounding Haumont: it was the sound of the cannons, of the wagons, of the footsteps that pulled ever toward the west. And in the day too that sound was audible, but seemed to come from the ground under his feet. There was talk of cannon which could throw shells all the way from Péronne into Paris. The men calcu-

lated the height which shells would have to attain for such a flight, and they would not believe it. But there was a feeling in the air that something was stirring, something very big perhaps. The infantrymen bore themselves proudly. They were glad that the movement was now forward, across the trenches, in the direction of the warehouses where things were stored such as they had known only in the fabulous days of peace. A fever descended on the soldiers, but the fierce spirit was not the same as in 1914. Now it was the ecstasy of despair. Now was needed just one leader, one great idea, and these soldiers would have performed a miracle the like of which the world had never seen. Schlump was almost on the point of volunteering again for service at the front. But the life of headquarters and his experiences at home had already corrupted him. "Even if we win," he thought, "it won't be the muddy hero of the trenches who will get the glory. That'll be for the shining uniforms which will come out in swarms from their hiding-places." And he did not volunteer.

They knew when the big offensive was launched; the news was brought back to them by the girls who served the high officers. They also knew exactly which army had received the honor of making the first attack, and what its objective was. "Didn't you know that?" the pretty little Walloon girl who looked after his room asked him. "Oh, *moi je sais tout*, I know everything."

The big day drew closer, and there was no more

real interest in the affairs at headquarters. It seemed as though everybody were standing still with ears strained toward the west: it was as if they wanted to intercept with their foreheads the messages that would flash through the ether.

The day came: another night passed, and the first reports came through: yes, there had been a victory —but there was no mention of the names they had been waiting for: the first thrust had stuck fast midway; the night attack, it appeared, had not been organized. They had relied on the power of numbers: they had given up the plan of some brilliant idea!

A few days later came the confirmation of this horrible fear. Schlump was still lying in his bed, listening. He had been wakened by a curious drumming and rattling, as of an interminable autumn rain beating on the windows and trickling down the pipes. Schlump got out of bed and went to the window: they were passing down the street, rows of eight, close behind each other: without arms, in tatters, heads and limbs in bandages, on crutches, dumb, wordless; tortured faces worn by fearful effort and by pain. And the line never ended. Where could so many men come from? Schlump dressed and went out. "It's been going like this since midnight," his neighbor told him, the clerk in the headquarters stores. And it went on through the whole day. No one could quite understand where such numbers could come from. In the evening Schlump went up to Maubeuge. The same picture. The officer in charge, Major Bock, had not

thought of hospitals. He had probably not received any orders. He only knew to which of the conquered cities he would proceed: Epernay, where the wonderful champagne cellars are. The poor devils lay in the churches, the market place was filled to overflowing, they lay on the sidewalks and choked up all the streets. Schlump thought of the retreat of the French from Russia a hundred years ago. "We've lost the war," he said to himself. He went into the soldiers' hall. It was filled to overflowing with wounded soldiers. They were happy, these poor fellows, to have a roof over their heads. Schlump sat down at the piano and played the most popular songs. They were grateful to him. They brought him whiskey, and more whiskey, much more than he could drink; and they put the glasses in rows on the top of the piano. "Drink, buddy," they said, "and play: we're happy to be out of that mess." Schlump drank and played like a madman. He became drunk, he became an automaton, they poured the drinks down his throat, and his hands played and banged on the piano till the instrument wailed and groaned. The hours passed in this tumult —and suddenly a silence fell: the officer in charge, a fat major, had come in. Schlump stood up—the others were already on their feet—and leaned against the piano. The fat major struck the table with his riding-whip, so that all the glasses danced, and screeched in a thin, hard voice through the mists of smoke, "Ten o'clock: the soldiers' hall is closed. Every one outside." No one moved. The fat major turned as red as

a boiled crab, his eyes bulged from their sockets, he crashed his whip down on the table so that the glasses jumped off, and his voice went into falsetto. "Everybody out!" No one moved. At the back a couple of men began to swear. Thereupon the fat major lifted his whip and hit the man nearest to him across the face: the man had a bandage round his head. Schlump could not contain himself any more. "Kill the fat swine!" he yelled across the room. And by now glasses were flying through the air. After them came tables and chairs. There was a wild shouting, pandemonium.

By the time the men came to themselves the major had disappeared. He had fled through a rear door. What had become of his adjutant no one knew. An hour later the guard came up. The soldiers went out obediently and lay down to sleep on the cold stones. Schlump staggered back to Haumont. It was freezing cold that night. In the morning he sent his mother some money and wrote her that we had lost the war.

Schlump stood again in front of his office and watched the wounded soldiers wandering aimlessly through the streets. A few barracks had been hastily put up for the worst cases. A soldier from the trenches came down the street, a thick-set fellow walking helplessly. It was only on closer view that Schlump recognized the silver scabbard of a lieutenant. Such a mistake could never have taken place with a staff officer. A soldier of the artillery school came by, in high

boots and with ringing spurs, and saluted. Thereupon the lieutenant stopped, his face turned crimson, and he began to yell at the poor artilleryman, "You lousy gunner! You Goddam gunner! Beat it! March! Beat it!" The lieutenant must have gone mad. But Schlump was still more amazed when the mad lieutenant called out to him, "Man alive! What are you doing here?" And he recognized him. It was his neighbor, Eger, whom he had met long ago in the crowd that was called up for service—every man with his soldier's box, and every man filled with enthusiasm. Eger was only three years older than himself; he had been assigned at once to another regiment, a reserve regiment, and he had not been seen or heard of since then. "I can't look at a gunner," he said; "every time I see one I go mad with rage." Schlump brought him into the back room, locked the office, and put before him some cocoa and some American cakes, which the lieutenant ate eagerly. "And now tell me," Schlump said. And they began to talk and to exchange reminiscences, and then they slept together (though the lieutenant from the front was covered with lice and had the itch), and in the morning they began all over again.

"Well," said Eger, "you already know how I was transferred from Krotoschin back to the western front. And what a time I had before I could locate my regiment. I found the headquarters dugout, after days of searching, down under the rocks. From there they sent me to the third battalion. That was located way

at the front. They were shooting all the time like mad —you know all about that, I don't have to tell you. I found the battalion commander behind a railroad embankment. He had only three officers left, and he assigned me at once. I was to take over the first company, although I knew nothing about the lay of the land. I jump over the embankment and go forward in spurts. No trenches—only shell-holes. Way toward the front I manage at last to find a couple of men. Just thrown together from every company and several regiments. I creep to the left and establish contact with the ninth company: eight or nine men at the most. I crawl to the right: nothing. There the cliff went down sheer. I could see a long way off, and I could even make out columns marching in the distance. They were marching in a northeasterly direction! French soldiers! They must have broken through. In a couple of hours we were cut off. I had no idea what lay in front of us. I could see a little wood, half shattered; behind that, I supposed, lay the Frenchmen. I sent the word down the line: 'Advance slowly!'

"We creep forward. The artillery fire was way behind us now. Not a single shot—nothing! I stand up and march forward, holding my gun, calmly, as if I were walking along a furrow. The ninth company, on the left, closes up with us. And then suddenly: tak-tak-tak-tak from the right! Five or six men are lying on the ground, screaming like mad. Something hits me, and I go down into the mud. That was a bullet in

my behind. Next to me lies a man with his chin blown away and another man with a shot in his privates. He was crying and screaming like a lunatic. He wanted me to take him along; I couldn't. I gave him first aid and promised him to return. I crept toward the left and gave the officer specific instructions about taking over the couple of men I had left. Then I dragged myself back. Man, what pains I had! The Frenchies kept up their fire on the embankment—not one reply from our artillery. I dragged myself along across the embankment. There below stood the battalion commander, still with his three officers, all excited and waving his arms. I reported and beat it. I also told him to send stretcher-bearers for the wounded. I saw a second lieutenant in front of me; he was wounded in the forearm. I caught up with him and he let me lean on him. 'It looks bad here,' he said. 'Tomorrow morning they'll clean the rest of us up.'

"We limped forward in a southeasterly direction. We came to a railroad crossing. There were some thirty wounded men there waiting for stretcher-bearers. I couldn't go another step. The two of us sat down, or lay down, as best we could. And then—a big shot! Way behind. Our artillery! Whh-eee-ew! A big, heavy shell! And right on our bridge—on the upper edge! The thirty men rolled over and screamed horribly. They all had belly wounds. We were sitting on the other side and saw the whole thing. I think I got an attack of delirium, and ever since then I just go mad with rage whenever I see a gunner.

"To continue," he said. "We went on. Right near the tunnel under the embankment we discover some dugouts. We creep in. Everything full: all commissariat men. 'For God's sake, go and get the wounded. The poor devils will bleed to death.' 'No room here: not another man can get in.'

"We go on. The road bends to the south. A motor ambulance comes tearing up like fury from behind. 'He won't stop,' the second lieutenant says. 'We'll see about that,' I answer. I stand in the middle of the road and I aim my revolver at the driver. 'Halt!' I yell. And the boy actually halts. The car is empty! We go tearing like mad toward the south. Suddenly he stops. Field hospital. We get out.

"It was a half-demolished church, filled to overflowing with the wounded. They were performing operations in the sacristy by the light of a tallow candle! Not a single assistant was around. The second lieutenant gives me first aid. It was a flesh wound, right through, nothing dangerous. We found a nurse. 'Go farther down the line if you can,' she said. 'We can't help you. We have no bandages, no iodine, nothing.' The pain had let up; I picked myself up and we marched on. Eastward. The night comes, and we have to go forward slowly. We are overtaken by artillery in retreat. And now the infantry comes up. A terrific jam. The poor infantrymen sink into the mud. The automobiles keep passing in between. We march along with the Goddam gunners. I think I must have slept while marching. In the morning they unlimber the

guns. We go along some more till we reach a field station with the American flag, which they must have left behind in their advance. Then we found a munition depot with French munitions. And in it a tremendous hospital! I get a bed, right at the top, the second lieutenant right next to me. And now we can lie down, sleep! Near us, around us, behind us, heavily wounded men.

"We remain here a couple of days. Suppose airmen come and drop bombs on the munitions depot! I ask the doctor about ambulance trains—the railroad is only a few steps away. He shrugs his shoulders: 'Perhaps tomorrow. Perhaps next week.'

"And in the night airmen came and bombed the depot. The place must have been full of gas shells—cyanide and other poison gases. Every man tries to get out of the place—the heavily wounded, with belly shots! Every one! The only ones left in the place were the men who had no legs, and they lay there wailing and howling with fear. God! What a column that was: half-dead men, in their shirts, or naked, or with bedsheets over their shoulders, in the moonlit night. The shells begin to explode, thunder and lightning, hell let loose! And the half-dead men begin to run, and get tangled up in their bandages and go sprawling. It becomes light behind us: the hospital is burning! And at every step a couple of men collapse and fall, moaning and bleeding. The gutters were full of men. One man tore the bandages from his stomach and screamed at the top of his voice: he had gone mad.

Then he suddenly stopped and rolled over on his side. Man! I'll never forget that scene. There must have been a couple of thousand men lying in that hospital. They came streaming across the fields from every side toward the road. We wandered along together like some horrible procession of ghosts, but all of us groaning and crying, along the road which followed the embankment. And as we went along the numbers became smaller and smaller. One man sits down in the fresh grass and begins to cry: 'Mother!' he wails. 'I've got to die now.' We go on. We leave behind us a wide track of blood and bandages. The hospital still lights our way like a tremendous torch. At last only a couple of hundred men are left.

"The dawn begins to come up. We see a railroad station in the distance. That gives us hope. We march on: and suddenly a troop of military police come up and stop us. What's the matter? The place is filled to overflowing with the wounded. An officer comes up to me and says, 'Buddy, you'll have to turn back.' He'd recognized me by my button: I saved two things from the hospital—my shirt and my cap! I can't utter a word. My blood boils with rage, I want to break down and weep. The poor devils sit down in the grass and become silent.

"The police have left. We go back a little way, across the embankment, and we get through—just myself, the second lieutenant, and one other man. We come to the station: an ambulance train! And the engine is steaming! We storm into one of the cars. The

joy of it! We forget everything. A couple of ambulance men look at us shyly and steal away. I go through several of the cars. The beds are all filled. But there's plenty of room between the beds. There's room enough for all those men sitting in the grass just outside the village, bleeding to death. The chief medical officer comes along. 'Lieutenant, I can't take you along. I've reported the number to headquarters, and I can't go beyond that number.' This was too much for me. I draw my revolver, and I shout in despair, 'I'll shoot any man that tries to put me off this train.'

"At that same instant the locomotive pulled out. And we got out here, in Haumont."

Schlump was not a swindler and profiteer by nature. Since the visit of the police to his office he had lost his interest in business. Moreover, he believed that with the ten thousand marks he had sewed into the lining of his coat he was rich enough. He had something else now to occupy his free time: he had begun to read. In a little stationery store he had found a book which was printed on poor paper and badly bound. But the contents of the book had captured him completely, and they filled his soul. They were the love-letters which Mirabeau sent to his sweetheart Sophie from the prison which he had to endure for her sake. The wonderful French eloquence of those letters filled him wholly with their unshatterable faith in life, and he felt as though in some strange way he was a partner to this love and its pains. Schlump took

lonely walks in the night and gesticulated like one who was boundlessly in love. And yet he had not the remotest idea with whom he was in love and who it was that made him so happy and so unhappy. He was so absorbed in himself that he had no eyes for the sweet white flower which blossomed near him and which was waiting to bestow its perfume on him. In his house lived a very young little Walloon girl, with black hair and brown eyes, big brown eyes, and with fresh red cheeks and pretty teeth. She had a strong, beautiful body and little feet with slender ankles. She came from a near-by village, and she was the servant in the house where Schlump lived with two old people. Every Saturday he put four francs on the table for her, and she did not want to take the money, though she was as poor as a church mouse. The window of Schlump's room gave on a narrow, ugly yard, which she frequently had to cross, going back and forth. A ladder which leaned against the wall led from his window down into the yard: it probably stood there because there was no other place for it. Once, while Schlump stood at the window sunk in thought, she passed by below, stopped, and asked him whether things were going well with him. He answered in the affirmative and returned the question politely and absentmindedly. She shook her head sadly and went on. Schlump forgot to ask her what was causing her so much care. A couple of weeks later she came into his room and began to dust and clean up. He happened to be reading his love-letters and did not even look

up. She came close to him, pointed at his book, and said in a vexed voice, "*Toujours vos poésies.*" He laughed and asked her whether she never got any enjoyment out of love-letters. She said no and turned to go again. At the door she stopped. Schlump wanted to be polite, and just to make conversation, asked whether she had ever been in love.

"Why, of course," she said, with a sigh.

"When was that?"

"Right now."

"Have you a sweetheart, then, whom you can't meet?"

"Yes, that's how it is."

"Daren't you even write?"

"Oh, yes, I can write. Every Saturday evening I go to the boundary of the military district; he comes to meet me, we speak a little while, then he gives me a letter and I . . ."

"Well? And you give him your letter?"

"Well, you see, Monsieur, I can't write as well as he, and I'm so ashamed when I have to give him my poor letters. I'm sure you can write lovely letters, you're always reading so much."

"I don't know about that, but even then it wouldn't be of much use to you. Or shall I write your letters for you?"

"Oh, yes, Monsieur. You write out a letter for me, and I'll come tomorrow morning and get it."

Schlump laughed: the idea tickled him—to be writing love-letters for a pretty young girl. But he did it

gladly. He had the feeling that there was something in his heart that he had to express, something that was suffocating him. And in the evening he sat down and wrote. He did not notice that he was robbing poor Mirabeau right and left—it seemed to him that what he wrote came out of the depths of his own soul. He only found it difficult to observe the proper degree of restraint. For he had to write as if all these glowing words came out of the shy heart of a young, a very young and very pretty, girl. (He had even asked her to show him one of her sweetheart's love-letters, so that he might know how closely their hearts were now united. But she would not give it to him; she reddened and only repeated that they loved each other dearly.) In the morning she came for her letter.

At noontime she thanked him and seemed to be well satisfied. A few days later she came again, and after that she came often, and Schlump wondered how she found so much time to run to the boundary of the military district and back. He spoke to her about it, and she answered that her sweetheart was now at the druggist's, across the way, but they didn't dare to speak to each other because that would make people talk.

But this feverish letter-writing helped poor Schlump very little. It did not explain to him with whom he was in love: on the contrary, it only fed the fires within him without showing him the sea into which the burning stream could pour itself and be extinguished. It was a blessed interval of love, and all that

was lacking to make him immeasurably happy or unhappy was the loved one.

At the same time the stern reality of life did not forget him. One day he received an order informing him that he was relieved, that he was to straighten out all his accounts, and when these were ready he was to proceed to Bohain, where he was to report to the Postal Control. Schlump was amazed. He reflected, "Perhaps they've found out something about those false notes or about my part in that heroic incident in the soldiers' hall where the fat major got it in the neck."

The couple of days soon passed. A pay clerk came over from the chief exchange office and went through the accounts with him, and early the next morning, at three o'clock, Schlump was out of bed, getting ready to march. Everything was already packed: he took his pack and went down. In order to get to the street he had to pass through a small room. He felt for the door and opened it. There, before him, stood Gabrielle, the lovely Walloon girl, in her night shift. And suddenly she embraced him and began to weep in a way that frightened him. It took quite a while before she came to herself and managed to utter a word: "*Vous l'avez trouvée:* have you found it?"

"Found what?"

"*La bague,* the ring."

"No," said Schlump, astonished.

She hurried upstairs into his room, as lightfooted as a cat, and brought down something. It was a copper

ring, finely wrought, with a green heart in the center. She stood before the light, which shone through her shift, and there were tears in her eyes, and she smiled at him, and suddenly Schlump saw how beautiful she was. He folded her in his arms, his pack rolled down, and he was very good to her now: as good as all the fire of his youth, burning within him, could make him.

"And the love-letters?" he asked her, after a couple of hours.

"I've kept them all," she whispered, with her head on his breast, and the candle flickered up and shed eager, sly lights on her body.

That morning Schlump did not set out on the march until eight o'clock.

Schlump rode toward the southwest. The longing in him was unsatisfied; he thought back to the pretty Walloon girl, and he felt her kisses on his lips. But he knew beyond all doubt that she was not the one his heart had been longing for.

He chatted with his comrades, who had come from the front and were now returning. Next to him sat a soldier who had run away from his company because he could not stand the filth of the trenches any more. He had sold his equipment in Belgium, where every piece had its regular price. "Now I'm going back into my company, back to the old grind, for a while. At least I've eaten my fill a couple of times and done nothing for a couple of weeks. The sergeant'll raise hell with me, and that's about all. They're only too

glad when we return. What can they do to us? There's nothing worse than the trenches, is there?"

At Bohain Schlump got out. The Postal Control was in a big red house not far from the station. He reported to the captain. The captain let him stand there at attention, turned his back on him, and told him to report to Corporal Jolles. The latter gave him a package of post cards with red ten-pfennig stamps on them and showed him a room where two men sat at a table with the same kind of cards in front of them. The post cards were all written in a bad hand in the French language. They came from the peasant women, who wrote to their sons or husbands on the other side of the front to say that the red cow was giving milk again, that the heifer was with young, and that every one was well. They hoped that the war, that terrible misfortune, would soon be over and that soon they would be able to work together again. Schlump read all his postal cards through: they were all the same. He put his check on them and passed them on.

He soon became accustomed to his new work and surroundings. Corporal Jolles, who came from Cologne, was an easy-going, good-natured sort of fellow, and the two of them became friends. Their life was cozy and comfortable. When the weather was good they could hear the thunder of the cannons on the western front, and they were reminded that over there thousands of young lives were being brought to a miserable end every day. They had to accustom themselves to keeping such thoughts out of their heads.

Schlump got up every morning at eight o'clock. He had been quartered in one of those simple worker's dwellings which consisted of nothing more than one good room and kitchen. In each of these stood a bed. Over the bed which stood in the better room lay a handsome cover. Schlump slept in this room. And in the kitchen, on the broad bed with its motley cover, slept the honest and peaceful husband and wife. About half-past eight in the morning Jolles would come down the street—he lived a couple of houses higher up, near where the street led into the cemetery—and shout, "Hey, Schlumpy: come on, boy, we're going for coffee." They went back to Jolles' house and drank coffee or chocolate, and at nine o'clock they went through the narrow gardens behind the houses to their work. At eleven o'clock Jolles would come into his tiny room—he had provided Schlump with a separate office—and offer his friend a cigar. At twelve o'clock they went out for lunch. They always went to a little restaurant where the cooking was excellent. For Jolles had the most marvelous connections. He knew all the butchers in the headquarters slaughter-yards, all the bakers in the headquarters bakeries, and the clerks in the stores. Wherever he came he got the choicest morsels. A Frenchwoman cooked French style for Jolles and Schlump. A German cook looked after the orderlies, the registrars, and the clerks in the office. The captain ate in the officers' mess, together with another captain and an old major. Thus everything was excellently arranged, and the war could go

on for a long time. After lunch they took a rest until three o'clock. At three o'clock they took a little bite, a cup of chocolate and a plate of fresh strawberries, delivered by the cemetery gardener. Then they worked a couple of hours in the office: and then came the most important part of the day—the evening. They ate supper at Jolles' home, and supper consisted of all the delicacies that Jolles could hunt up, which he himself often prepared with a high degree of skill. The suppliers had to give of their very best for the festive evening meal. A little table was set up in front of the door; a white cloth was laid on it, the armchairs were brought out, and they sat down first to an excellent bottle of wine, white Bordeaux or red Burgundy. Sometimes they invited to their home a couple of the actors who were hanging around headquarters to make life bearable for the staff officers. In return for a good meal they came readily and held forth to the two friends.

Jolles loved wine as he loved life itself. He was some fifteen years older than Schlump, had red hair—and no luck with the women. They often chatted late into the night, and nothing—or next to nothing—was lacking to make their happiness complete. And the little that was missing Schlump was to provide in good time.

And with this comfort and ease they lived into the summer.

Every morning when Schlump stepped out of his house, he greeted the pretty Louise, who, across the

way, was cleaning the two steps of her house. Her mother was dead; her father left for work early every morning and came back late at night. In the front room of her house they had quartered a civilian who had been mobilized for light duty—an old bachelor with a red face and a pipe in his mouth; he was immensely proud of his young and pretty landlady, and whenever he boasted about her to his elderly colleagues, he screwed his eyes together. It was very plain that they all envied him his young and pretty Louise.

She wore blue stockings and very short skirts: she was as blond as a Gretchen and had wonderful deep blue eyes, which went well with her stockings. She always acknowledged Schlump's salutation, and whenever he looked at her eyes he had to think of his homeland. She often came over and rummaged among his books and chatted with his landlady, who was not old, either, and was also blond, but very ugly.

In the evening, before he went up to Jolles', Schlump would stop awhile at the house across the way and chat with the young and pretty Louise. Then she would remain standing in front of her door, and when Schlump reached Jolles' house and sat down before the door to drink his wine, he looked back and still saw her white arm shining in the dusk.

One evening Schlump failed to go up to Jolles'. He sat with pretty Louise in her room. She showed him her charming garden, which lay behind the little house and was fenced off by a high wall; and then they went back to the kitchen which the labor of this sweet

child had turned into a neat and cozy nest. She was as clean as a kitten; her little white bed stood against the wall and sent out an odor of fresh linen, like a young girl. The father was already asleep in the room above, and it was silent. The door to the garden stood open, and the dark blue night sent the intoxicating breath of its dreams into the room. The crickets chirped loudly, as if to deafen all eavesdroppers, and a mild, soft wind arose outside, stole into the room, and breathed upon his hair and lips.

She stood up, closed the door, and lit the lamp. The magic was gone. "I wanted to show you my books," she said. And she showed him a shelf of fine old volumes, bound in leather, with golden lettering which in many places had been worn away by the years. They were books of the time of Voltaire, such as may still be bought for very little along the quays of the Seine: Schlump took down one volume and ran through its pages—the *Contes* of La Fontaine. Brown stains on the paper betrayed the age of the book. The rhymed stories were illustrated with engravings by Doré, who knew better than any other man how to depict love. They sat down together on one chair and began to read.

They read the story of the girl who had one great longing: to hear the nightingale sing all through the night. And Schlump asked Louise to explain the words he did not understand, which he wanted to hear her utter. Then they looked at the fine drawing which the

master Doré had made for this story: the mother looking in horror through the door on to the balcony where her daughter has fallen asleep, and the uncle, with his shrewd but kindly face, calming her. For the loose girl lay there with her lover, it was broad daylight, and they had thrown back the covers for coolness. But the girl held in her hand the nightingale which had been singing for her in the night.

Beautiful little Louise shivered faintly and she suddenly put out the light. For she did not want Schlump to see that she had turned red. But the crickets outside now chirped so loud that the whole room was filled with the sound, and the scent of the flowers streamed in so heavily that it seemed to them they heard the nightingales singing. But their hearts beat furiously, and the magic of their youth carried them into a paradise made of pure bliss, in which a thousand nightingales poured out their love-songs tenderly.

Somewhere round midnight there rose in the west a deep low murmur, which drew nearer and nearer, and changed into a loud roaring: and at last the factory sirens in the town woke up and screamed like a million tormented demons. The two lovers started up, and in her flight little Louise let the nightingale escape from her grasp: "*Des aéroplanes anglais,* English aeroplanes!" The dear child sprang out of bed, threw something over herself (for they had followed the ex-

ample of the lovers in the fable), Schlump sprang into his clothes, and the two of them hurried down into the cellar.

"My father!" she whispered. "If my father comes down!"

"And the old man," stammered Schlump.

"Oh, the old man's fast asleep, he's half deaf; but my father—oh, God, my father!" Poor Louise looked around, terrified, helpless. In the corner stood a tremendous bed-crate, perhaps two meters long. It had been brought down into the cellar at the time when her father had taken to sleeping in the room upstairs. They lifted up the heavy lid and Schlump climbed in.

There was a feather-bed inside, and Schlump felt warm and comfortable. Through the cracks between the planks he could look out and watch Louise. She had hidden the remainder of his clothes and had lit the candle which always stood ready in the cellar. She cowered down near the bed-crate and held the candle in her hand.

But the father did not come. The shrill scream of the sirens sank to a deep bass and finally died down altogether. Louise began to freeze. She put out the candle, opened the lid of the crate, and came in, light as a fairy, next to Schlump. "I won't go up into the kitchen yet," she said. "The fliers might return."

"And suppose your father doesn't find you?"

"Oh, he'll think I'm in a neighbor's house; we've made a hole through the cellar wall: so you'll have to speak very softly, too."

It was wonderful down in the bed-crate, and before long they fell asleep, exhausted. They slept long and deep. The hours passed, the sun rose in the east; but it could not break through into the cellar and waken the sleepers. And it rose higher and higher.

That morning Jolles looked for his friend in vain. He became anxious, for he had missed him the night before. And the neighbor, too, the young widow who lived next to Schlump, had noted his absence, and she joined in the search.

When the two sleepers in the bed-crate awoke at last, they heard voices near them in the cellar. They lay silent and moveless and looked terrified through the chinks between the planks.

"I saw Monsieur cross over to this house last night, but he didn't come back; I would have heard him, I sleep so badly," said the young widow. Jolles growled something. "His shoes are upstairs, side by side with the slippers of Mademoiselle Louise; they can't have run away barefoot," said the young widow again. Suddenly Jolles sprang in front of the widow and barred her way.

"Madame," he said loudly into her ear, "don't go into that corner, or you'll be frightened out of your wits! The two of them have hanged themselves."

The widow uttered a scream and flew from the cellar. But Jolles came over to the crate and said, "Make it snappy! I'll stand in front of the door and let no one in."

A stocking which had been hanging out under the

lid had given Jolles the signal. They dressed swiftly. Then they climbed over the garden wall which gave on the field. For quite a distance they found cover in the bushes. Then Schlump hastened to the office, and pretty young Louise ran to her aunt, who lived at the other end of the town and who was old and deaf. A little later Jolles came into the office and laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks.

In the evening Louise returned to the house as if nothing had happened.

But the old man with the pipe must have got wind of something. For he took Schlump to one side and urged him solemnly to keep quiet, like a real gentleman. "Because Louise is a decent girl," he said.

From now on Schlump visited the blond Louise every night. But he always waited until the fliers had passed over the town; they came regularly at midnight, but their objective was the neighboring town of Busigny, where they rained their destruction down on the railroad station. That late passage of the fliers was a heavy drag on Schlump's patience.

The Germans sought to better their position by several offensives, which all came to the same end. The heroic infantry managed to gain considerable ground, but the support was always lacking. The great enterprise had not been thought through to the end, and countless young people paid the price with a horrible, premature death.

The streams of wounded began to pass through

Bohain, too—men who had been wounded slightly and could still walk. The others had to die where they lay, or else on the roads. Prisoners, too, were brought into Bohain and gathered into big compounds. They kept the French and the English separate, for they could not get along with each other. Schlump was called over to serve as interpreter for the French prisoners. The inhabitants of the village had saved up linen and clothes for their captured countrymen though they themselves had scarcely enough to cover their bodies. Schlump had to be go-between for the prisoners and the villagers so that no espionage could be practiced. The poilus looked just like the German front-line troops; they had had enough of it, and they said little. They would gladly have gone home at once, to earn their daily bread in peaceful pursuits. But there was one man among them who attracted attention. He talked big, he was well dressed and well fed, and there were no signs of strain on him. He was the son of a silk manufacturer of Lyons, he had simply come up to the front with a transport of field rails, had been overtaken by the offensive and roped in with the others. He was full of patriotic enthusiasm, and felt sorry for Schlump that he should still believe in a German victory. (Schlump was by no means so sure of it, but he would not let the big-mouth know it.) He spoke of the Americans, who day after day were unloading huge quantities of guns and automobiles and munitions, and vast numbers of troops. "They're laying down a straight railroad line to the

east, eight tracks side by side. Another couple of weeks and it's all over with you," he said.

"You heroic Frenchmen," answered Schlump. "You've got to get the whole world together before you can beat the solitary German. And even then you're letting your imagination run away with you."

They argued for a long time. At last they came to talking of what started the war and what they were still fighting for, and at last the Frenchman said, "Now you listen to me. They tell a pretty fable in our country which will help you to understand the reason for this war and how it's going to end." And he began to tell the story with much eloquence and many gestures.

"Two families of hens once lived in a big yard which belonged to a wealthy peasant. There was a high wire fence between the two families so that the strains wouldn't get crossed. In one family the cock lived peacefully with his hens and called them whenever he found a grain of maize or corn. Every hen that laid an egg he saluted with proud pecks of his beak and much loud cackling. But the other cock kept running along the fence, ruffling his feathers and beating his wings, and stretching out his neck and pecking with his beak as if he wanted to destroy his decent neighbor. One day, when the sun was shining more brightly and more peacefully than usual, the wicked cock jumped over the fence and fell on his peaceful brother. The assaulted cock, who happened to have found a worm and whose thoughts were far from war,

got badly beaten up. His comb was bleeding; one eye had been torn out so that he could only see half the world.

" 'Listen, you,' he cried out in rage. 'You're going to find out now who is the stronger.'

"And he went at the invader with mortal fury and landed him a blow in the middle of his forehead which stretched him on the ground. Then he put his claw on his body to prevent the wounded cock from getting up. After a while the latter opened his eyes and said in a weak voice, 'Brother, you see me lying here defenseless, at your mercy, and I have no more strength to fight. Love and goodness are the two greatest gifts bestowed by the Creator on us poor animals, so that we might show ourselves worthy of Him. You are not going to treat these divine gifts with contempt; you will forgive your adversary when he lies helpless at your feet.'

" 'You're right,' said the victor. 'God has given us enough understanding to know that we ought to leave our neighbor in peace. But He also gave us spurs and claws to defend ourselves from robbers and thieves.' Thereupon he gave him the deathblow, 'for,' he said, 'who is going to guarantee that he won't attack me again tomorrow if I forgive him today?' "

The Frenchman looked triumphantly round the circle of faces and sat down.

"We're not so skillful at telling fables," answered Schlump. "But there's a story told in our country, too, which fits the case.

"Listen. I'll tell you the story of poor Boch.

"In a village not far from my home town there lived three peasants, Boch, Foch, and Tim. Boch was still young, and by inexhaustible industry and activity he had restored the inheritance which his father had left him in a neglected and ruined condition. And so it came that on Saturdays he would go riding through the village proudly, and he cracked his whip perhaps a little louder than he might have done. This irritated his neighbor, Foch, beyond all bounds, for he was very vain and he wanted to be the only one who could crack his whip so loud. But the most hateful of the three was Tim, the wealthy mill-owner, a big rogue, who would have liked to get every one of the peasants into his sack. He went over to Foch and sicked him on till Foch was wild with rage. Boch had long noticed that the two men were plotting against him, but he said nothing.

"One day when he was riding again on his bay mare through the village he saw the two of them standing at the gate, each with a stone in his hand. 'They want to strike me dead from behind,' he thought. And to anticipate them, he struck the nearer of them with his whip across the face so that he fell down, covered with blood. That happened to be Foch. Tim, who was standing behind him, threw down his stone and pelted down the street for all he was worth, shouting at the top of his voice and calling all the village together. He told them quickly and in much sorrow about the evil deed committed by Boch, and all the villagers

followed him, because they were in debt to him. Even some of the people from the neighboring yards came running, all in the hope of getting something for themselves in the mix-up. They fell on poor Boch. He defended himself like a hero and struck out on all sides with superhuman force. But they were too many. Some one put out a leg behind him, he fell, and all of them jumped on him and tore everything from him, down to his shirt. But Foch, who had meantime recovered, placed his foot on the body of poor Boch, and posed for the world to see. He twirled his mustache and jangled his spurs as if to say, 'I'm the most important person in the world.' But in the meantime Tim was dividing up the booty.

"The days passed and Boch soon recovered his health. The cattle had been stolen from his stalls, and his barns had been plundered and torn down. But he began once more to work, obstinately, tirelessly. And as he never lost his courage, he attained once again, at the end of a few years, to his old position of comfort and honor. And now he did not ride through the village, cracking his whip, but the people made place for him and greeted him respectfully, for they held him in high esteem and all felt guilty toward him. But Foch and Tim were mortally ashamed of themselves."

When Schlump had ended they were all silent. In one corner of the barracks sat an old Breton with tattered uniform. He was filling his pipe slowly: very carefully he gathered up the shreds of tobacco which

had fallen on his coat and trousers and said to no one in particular, "What wonderful liars they all are!"

The summer advanced, and still the cannons thundered. Sometimes Schlump would go for a walk in the fields, past blossoming gardens, and he felt the sorrow that lay upon all the people who passed. But he was young, and the song of the larks made him happy and wakened in him the old longing which he had brought with him out of Haumont. He felt as though some one were walking behind him with soft steps, calling his name lightly and tenderly. And when he stopped short and listened, the voice ceased to call him, and when he turned around, he felt her again behind him, as though she were playing with him. He went on and smiled a little and stroked the growing grain with his fingers. He spoke with no one about it, and when he was among his friends, he himself forgot it.

Once, returning from such a walk, he passed by the door of the church, which stood open. The sound of the organ came rolling out, and Schlump stopped. Some children were playing near by, and the sun warmed the quiet square: big flies slept on the white wall under the church windows, and behind him the swallows quarreled. Schlump went in. It took him a long time to become accustomed to the darkness. He sat down on a small chair near a niche and looked round. He was all alone, and only the organ tones rolled through the big spaces above. A bright shaft of

yellow sunbeams fell slanting by the chancel, and a million points of light played on the shining, gilded sword of the archangel Michael. Before him, between heavy pillars, stood the Maid of Orleans on a pedestal, with a white banner and the helm on which one golden lily shone. From under the lily blond locks rolled out and fell down upon her shoulders. Schlump looked into her brown eyes, and his glance caressed the fine mouth, the beautiful arm, and the fine, slender fingers. He felt as though he had seen her before, as though he had spoken with her, words that came from the heart and stirred him to the depths. He was tired and leaned his head against the high support of the *priedieu*. The organ rang above him and filled the spaces with its deep mysterious chords, as though it sought to speak to him of death and of retribution. Schlump saw himself again in the trenches, and around him the dead lay in their blood. They lay on their stomachs and had their faces twisted round to be able to look up to him. He fled from them, but the numbers of those green faces that stared at him kept growing, and he had to stumble across the ghastly, mutilated bodies; and everywhere before him the earth opened and bared the mass graves in which thousands of the dead lay moldering and putrefying. He had to wade through them, and some of them still stirred, for they had been buried alive, and from some of them worms crept out and crawled up his boots. He saw dying men coming to meet him, covered with horrible wounds, in order to lie down at his feet.

Schlump moaned. He wanted to flee, but they clung to him, and he had to draw them along. He began to strike out around him, and then he heard a fine, light voice calling. He looked up: the Maid of Orleans had stepped down; she had set the banner against the pillars and had taken off her helm. She smiled and stretched out to him her lovely hand. Then he recognized her. It was Johanna, with whom he had spoken so shyly at home. "Always I walked behind you," she said, "and called you, but you did not know me. Do you remember, when the war began, how you kissed me under the chestnut blossoms? But you would not dance with me. And do you remember how I wrote you that letter at the hospital out of the anguish of my heart? Do you remember how we spoke to one another on the street? See, I have always prayed for you, that you should not become bad. Often I walked behind you and called you, but you did not know me." And the saintly Johanna bent down to him and kissed him. Then she withdrew her hand from him and set the helmet on her head and took up the banner.

And when Schlump awoke she was standing again on the pedestal by the pillar. But it seemed to him that she still smiled faintly at him as in his dream.

The playing of the organ had stopped, and the organist came stumbling down the steps in his heavy boots. It was a soldier in field-gray uniform. He wore a bandage round his head.

Schlump went out. The sun had set. He went homeward with long strides, still half in a dream, like a

child awaiting Christmas Eve and its presents. In the night he sat down and wrote a letter to Johanna. He wrote till late into the night. Near him lay a big heap of spoiled, crumpled paper. At last he seemed to be content with himself; he stood up, and standing, read his letter through again.

DEAR JOHANNA:

I keep thinking of you all the time. Do you remember the time when we parted on the street and I could not utter a word? If you have not found another, and if you still love me as you did when you wrote to me in the hospital, then, dear Johanna, answer me again with another such letter. I keep thinking of you all the time. But if you have another whom you love, then do not answer me, for I shall be very unhappy.

With warmest greetings from

Your SCHLUMP.

From that time on Schlump went often into the church and sat down near the saintly Johanna, who always smiled at him out of her kindly eyes.

After two days there came a letter from his home town which made him the happiest soldier in all the German army.

They used to change off in taking charge of the office and preparing the reports for General Headquarters and for the local staff officers. Schlump happened to be on duty that day. He was sitting all alone in his office and looking out of the window. Suddenly

the door opened and a soldier came in, a long, bony, dark fellow, in the uniform of the Home Guards. His name was Sack and he was twenty-eight years old. He came from Swabia and before the war had been a civilian. He had studied in several departments, but devoted himself finally to philosophy; after the war he was going to be a priest.

"Buddy, you've played in luck all right to have been sent to us," said Schlump. "There isn't a softer job in the service. No one here ever has to go up for inspection: we're insured here for the duration of the war."

The long dark soldier frowned and rolled his eyes: "I didn't come here to look for a soft job. I'll do my duty here as the others do theirs in the trenches."

"The only difference is that there's no shooting here," said Schlump dryly and thought, "The fellow's crazy." Then he showed the man his duties and went out to find quarters for him. Never since he had been a soldier had he come across anything like this. Why was the man a mere private if he was such a splendid liar? Schlump made up his mind to get to know the newcomer more intimately. The opportunity presented itself before long.

One day Schlump was crossing the market place when the factory sirens began to howl. He heard the roar of the propellers above him at the same instant, and he dashed into the nearest house. The air was filled with the wild screaming of the sirens—then there was a crash, the cellar rang, and the people in

it shrank together in terror. The French began to cry, "*Mon dieu, mon dieu, Seigneur!*" The roaring died down, the sirens were silent, and Schlump went out again. A crowd had gathered outside in front of the house. A bomb had fallen in the center of the market place, and the splinters had hit a young girl. It was the French girl who cooked for them. She was in a ghastly condition, something too horrible to be looked at! They covered up her body and carried her away. Schlump went up to the office and found no one there but Sack, for it was still early. In great excitement Schlump told him what had happened, and he cursed the English soldiers who threw bombs senselessly into the towns.

"The whole war is horrible," he said, "just dirty slaughter, and if the human race can bear with it for years, or stand by looking on, it deserves nothing but contempt. But He Who created the human race should be utterly ashamed of Himself, for His work is a disgrace."

Schlump wanted to run out, but the tall dark soldier had leaped up; his eyes were rolling, and he said in a voice of thunder, "Stop! What you have said is blasphemy. I won't listen to such language."

"Well, well, buddy, you don't have to get so excited about it," said Schlump soothingly. "I didn't mean exactly you."

The tall soldier had taken his seat again and now continued more calmly, "I know very well that you can't have meant me—I'm not the Creator. But I can't

permit you to talk so blasphemously about things which are above you." And then he gave him a long philosophic lecture, of which Schlump understood about one half. "You see, my boy," he said, "you must distinguish between the larger and the smaller point of view. From the smaller point of view the war brings only sorrow and care and endless pain, and more than that, destruction, meanness, and corruption. But when you take up the larger viewpoint, you come to quite other conclusions. Think how many people have died in the course of the centuries. What does a couple of million more matter, a handful, not even a handful in the endless sea of eternity? Do you really think that the individual matters? The individual is nothing, as an individual he has no value; he is only a constituent part of that infinitely greater collectivity, the people. The individual man has no soul, but the people has a soul. And every man is of value only to the extent that he serves his people. Do you think that the Greeks whom we so admire would have produced such wonderful works of art and such tremendous thoughts if the people had been worthless, if there had been only a couple of gifted men and the masses had been valueless? No, no; it was the whole people that worked and produced, from generation to generation, until finally so much genius was heaped up that it brought forth a Plato or a Phidias or a Homer. That is why it is not proper to honor such men for having given us their works, but the people must be honored which gave birth to such men. Yes,

it would be better if the names of these men were forgotten. And for that reason the things that happen in this war are not senseless. Many must die, and the entire people must suffer terribly. But remember: it is only out of suffering that great things are born. Did not the Greeks suffer much? And is there greater suffering than war? All of us must suffer now, and our people is fortunate that it must suffer more than any other people in the war. And this suffering is the price we must pay in order that we may produce from our midst men who will tower above us and who will carry the glory and fame of our people into the far future. And there is only one thing, my friend; bear in mind that you are nothing, and that the honor and greatness of your people is everything."

Schlump was silent, for he observed that the dark soldier meant all he said. But he wondered to himself why this soldier, who talked so big, had found a soft job at headquarters, and why he had not gone to the trenches where he could have suffered greatly for his people. He looked frankly at the soldier and then asked him about it.

"I am here," he answered, "because my commanding officer sent me here. I would go cheerfully and at once if he sent me to the trenches. But I also know," he added more softly, "I also know why Providence chose out this place for me, where I have plenty of leisure. Listen: I know that we are going to win the war"—Schlump opened his eyes wide—"and after the war there will be a great, united Europe, in which

the soul of each people will be able to unfold freely. That man will be leader who has a soul of superhuman greatness, one who was produced by our people, which has suffered more than all the others." His voice became softer and softer. "But I, my friend, I have been appointed from on high to create the language for this united Europe, and by the help of this language all the peoples will be able to understand each other, to unite in happy work, in friendly competition: the name of this language is Europarozn: I have five years' more work, at the outside. And that is just as long as the war will last."

He pointed to a tremendous sheaf of written sheets, which he always carried around with him in his pack. He had written it all down in the nights, when he had been able to work undisturbed. "To make room for this in my pack," he said, "I ate up my emergency rations."

Schlump went out shaking his head and wondered at the strange lunacy of the philosopher Sack.

The captain in charge of the Postal Control came from Breslau. He was a high-class person. He had been sent direct from his home town to General Headquarters, where he had earned the Iron Cross, Second Class. Later he won the Iron Cross, First Class, in Maubeuge, during an air attack, in which two waitresses had been killed. The captain had not been able to find shelter in time and he had been wounded in the thumb by a bomb splinter so that he bled pro-

fusely. For this he also got the black wound stripe. He had then been assigned to the Postal Control because he knew Polish, but he never read the Polish mail.

He fulfilled his duties to perfection by signing his name three times a day. This took him from eleven o'clock in the morning until five minutes before a quarter to twelve. This ended his duties for the day. He had at his command two orderlies who fed his pigs and sent big packages to their homes.

One day he called Jolles into his office: "Listen, Jolles," he said. "Something happened to me today. I was just coming out of the restaurant when I saw a rhyme written on the wall:

"With equal food and equal pay
We'd win the war 'most any day.

Do you know the rhyme, Jolles?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is that so? It's new to me. Stupid stuff, anyway. Well, I go a couple of steps farther, and there's a man who has obviously just come out of the trenches. His uniform was impossible. He jumped down from the pavement and stood at attention. But how the man carried himself! Belly pushed forward, head on one side. I go up to him. 'Don't you know,' I said, 'that when you see an officer you have to salute him by bringing your hand up to the edge of your cap?' 'Excuse me, Captain,' the fellow said with a grin: 'I thought at first, when I saw the captain in such a uni-

form, that he was a general at least.' What do you think, Jolles? How ought I to take that?"

"There's no doubt about it, Captain," said Jolles, his face very serious, "that the man was absolutely guilty of contempt. Some of these fellows have no respect for an officer any more. I hope that it won't come to worse," he added cheerfully. And then Jolles went to Schlump and told him the whole story gleefully.

But he had prophesied well, and it came to worse that same evening. In Bohain there was a soldiers' theater, housed in what had previously been a dance hall. There was to be a show at eight o'clock that evening. The officers sat down below, in the parterre. Right in front were the staff officers with their ladies, behind them the officers back from the front—there weren't many of them—and then a couple of headquarters sergeants. Those who sat upstairs, on the balcony facing the stage, were most of them wounded and on leave from the hospital. Schlump also sat upstairs with his friend Jolles.

Eight o'clock had long since passed. But the curtain did not rise. The soldiers became restless and began to crack jokes. One soldier in the front row stood up, took off his jacket, turned it inside out, and put it on again with the lining outside: then he drew his hat down on his nose and began to recite. The soldiers were amused, and they applauded.

But the commanding officer, who sat in an armchair in front of the stage between two nurses, was not

amused. He moved uncomfortably in his chair, took his monocle out of his eye, and then screwed it back into his pitifully stupid face. Suddenly, when the applause upstairs became thunderous, he sprang up and brayed up at the soldiers in a burst of rage, "I want silence up there!" Every one became silent. But the clown in the front row turned round and stared down in astonishment. Then he turned back to his comrades and said loudly, indulgently, "Boys, the colonel is absolutely right. You shouldn't crack such stupid jokes in front of these fine gentlemen. Instead of that, let's sing a real nice song about the war. All in time, now:

"Who's always got his women and wine
And never sleeps alone in his bed so fine?"

And the chorus of the soldiers rang back:

"Why, boys, it's the headquarters swine."

The commanding officer sprang to his feet; his face was as red as a boiled crab, and he yelled so loud that his voice broke, "Silence!"

But the clown refused to let himself be disturbed. He sang to the attentive audience.

"Who are the men whose only duties
Are dying of hunger and wounds and cooties?"

CHORUS: "We."

CLOWN: "Who says 'I'm with you to the death!'
And calls us bums beneath his breath?"

CHORUS: "The officer!"

CLOWN: "Who are the men who shed their blood?
Who's only good to die in the mud?"

CHORUS: "We."

The clown wanted to continue, but the commanding officer was screaming like a man in a fit, "Military Police! Military Police! Bring that man down!"

But there is nothing more offensive to the sight of a trench soldier than the brassard of the M.P. The men began to howl and roar, "Come on, boy, come right up here," and through the uproar were heard scattered words: "Lights out! Knives out! Beat him up! Smash him!" But the poor M.P. had to obey orders. Trembling with fear he made his way up the stairs: the ringing of his spurs could be heard through the tumult. Gradually the noise upstairs died down. The men let him pass down the balcony to the middle of the front row: and then a hundred hands grabbed him and pitched him down over the balustrade. He remained lying motionless where he fell. His neck was broken.

Two ambulance men sprang up and carried him away. Below the women had jumped to their feet in terror, and the officers formed a protecting circle round them. There was a wild rush for the doors, and in a few instants the hall was empty.

But on the parterre below glimmered darkly a wide pool of blood.

Our troops had fallen back on well-prepared positions, as the communiqués said. The headquarters of

the Eighteenth Army had long since withdrawn a considerable distance: at first to Avesnes, and then farther into Belgium, as far as Charleroi. And the heroes of the Postal Control were to move into an industrial village on the Maas, not far from Charleroi. Belgium looked now like one vast military camp, the railroad stations were crowded with soldiers looking for their units, the General Staff streamed toward the rear, and a strange excitement had taken hold of every one. Fierce epithets were shouted after the officers, and there was a universal feeling that the end of everything was close at hand.

Schlump lived with Jolles in a marvelous villa where everything still stood in its appointed place as it had been left by the owners on their flight four years ago. The servants still lived in their quarters and looked faithfully after their master's property.

In Belgium you could buy whatever you wanted. Schlump and Jolles felt that they had fallen into a paradise. They obtained the most wonderful dainties and lived even better than in Bohain. The caretaker's wife cooked for them, and perfect order reigned.

But the happy time could not last long. One day the news came that our troops had abandoned their well-prepared positions and that Lille and Tournay were now threatened. We no longer felt safe even on Belgian soil. The time had come to move. The Postal Control was lodged in an old house near the garden of a wonderful little castle, in which the staff officers of some division or other had fixed up a casino. One

morning Schlump crossed over to the castle and greeted the cook, who was standing at the gate.

"Buddy—what do you think of this?" exclaimed the cook. "Last night the officers beat it, secretly, without leaving a word behind."

"What?" cried Schlump. "Is it as bad as that?" And he hurried back with the news to Jolles.

The latter became serious. "Say," he said, "it's about time we made ourselves scarce."

Within a few minutes the men of the Postal Control were holding a council as to what to do. They resolved on the following course of action:

One: Not a moment was to be lost.

Two: Schlump was to persuade their little commissariat, i.e. the cook, to join up at once with the Postal Control and bring all his supplies with him.

Three: Jolles was to negotiate with the railway officials for a car.

Four: The orderlies were to be referred to the captain.

And now every man set to work. Schlump found it easy to persuade the cook. It appeared that he had splendid supplies, enough to last a month. The captain agreed to everything. Jolles, however, was in great difficulties. The freight yards were filled with railway trucks, all directed eastward. But there were no locomotives. Jolles came back and reported; then the hat was passed round, every man gave what he could spare, and Jolles returned to his labors; he was to try now to persuade a couple of the railroad men to at-

tach a car or truck to the first train waiting to pull out: the locomotive had been standing there with full steam up, only waiting for a clear road.

The maneuver succeeded. And throughout the day they worked like demons, transferring the supplies to the truck: canned meat, thousands of cigars, amazing quantities of cigarettes and whiskey, whole drums of rum. Finally they transferred the mattresses and bed covers and a small stove which they had once built in. In the evening they moved into the truck. The captain sat down in a corner and looked the picture of misery. Close to him stood the philosopher Sack, in complete marching-kit, his pack on his back, his gun at his side. They waited through the whole of the next day, and the monotony of it began to wear on them. On the third day Schlump and Jolles went out. They went to Charleroi to take farewell of the war and of headquarters over a bottle of wine. The town looked as it would on its yearly market day; wherever one went on the streets, nothing but jostling crowds of soldiers in field-gray uniform. They went into a saloon which until that time had been forbidden to the soldiers. The tables were all occupied by officers, who looked astonished at the two of them but said nothing. Jolles ordered the finest wine he knew of, and they passed a quiet, festive hour. They then went into a cabaret where the Belgians had used to drink their absinthe. The men were sitting at the small round tables; they kept their hats on their heads, and some were dancing to music in between the chairs

and tables. An excitement had poured itself through all the men. On the little platform, near the orchestra, a pretty girl with a crutch sat and sang soldier songs which had been edited slightly. Suddenly Schlump heard himself called by a loud, astonished voice. It was the architect who had helped him that time to make the counterfeit money. They celebrated their reunion and drank again and again, always faster than before.

At last Schlump saw everything only through a mist. All he could make out by now was that all the chairs and tables had been thrown down and the pretty girl with the crutch seemed to be carrying on with somebody on the platform. About midnight they all went. Jolles had disappeared, and Schlump staggered back with the architect to his quarters in the Rue du Mont. The architect had a big room with two beds. The cool air had sobered Schlump a little. They still chatted a bit.

"Boy," said the architect, "I'm on my way home with a civilian who has a wagon and two horses. I got a job in the exchange office toward the end, just like you. And now I have to transfer the whole business to Germany. The horse goes along, and so does the Frenchman who was my last agent. He's compelled to come along, of course. We have something like a million and a half in the safe. Toward the end the French came in crowds to bring us all the German money they could find. They wanted to have their municipal money back." But Schlump was already

asleep and did not hear what the architect was saying.

But suddenly round four o'clock in the morning he woke up as if somebody had called his name. He dressed himself quickly, and still half asleep, stumbled down the steps. He ran through streets he had never seen before. The cold air streamed against him, and half-starved workers passed him. A crowded street car went by him, and at the corner of the street stood a half-naked, half-frozen girl, crying in a weak, frightened voice, "Gazette! Gazette!" Schlump saw and heard it all as in a dream, but the girl's voice sank deep into his soul, so that in aftertimes he thought of her often. He went through unfamiliar squares; at one point he crossed a bridge over the Maas, and suddenly he heard Jolles calling him. He was right in front of their truck. He climbed in, exhausted, and in his sleep he heard the wheels squeaking and the truck rumbling. They were moving. He had come at the last moment.

When he woke up they were this side of Namur. It was afternoon. The train crept forward very slowly, and sometimes it stood still for hours at a stretch. They moved forward. In Namur they waited again for many hours. On the adjoining track was another train which had arrived before them and which was also going eastward. Here they got the latest news: a whole fleet of elegant automobiles had passed through Belgium and had fled into Holland. The Kaiser had been among them. The tall philosopher stood up when he heard this and rolled his eyes. "Never!" he said. "The

Kaiser will never abandon his troops in the hour of danger. Comrades, you will see." His voice rose to prophetic heights. "You will see that the holy war is only just beginning. The Kaiser will gather around him a corps of officers, the élite, and he will place himself at their head and set out westward. Dagger in hand, he will throw himself on the enemy, and new legions of the noblest among our people, drawn from every regiment, will join him and follow the white flag which the Crown Prince, his adjutant, will fling to the winds. He will sustain the timid and terrify the enemy. With his own body he will break through a breach. He will fall in battle, but they will carry his sacred body before them in the storm of battle, the symbol of the holy war. It will be a marvelous struggle, our enemies will become rigid with fear, and the whole world will applaud the heroes. We will make a noble peace, in which revenge will have no place. We will lift up the white banner, round which will assemble the best of our people. No one will know them by name, for they will all call themselves German. And our entire people will hasten to follow their example and labor with all their strength so that we will become a model to the nations."

There he stopped. The others looked at him out of big eyes and sneered. "The fellow's gone absolutely crazy," said Jolles.

In A., a townlet between Namur and Liège, there was a long halt. Jolles had gone out when suddenly

he came running back and reported that the locomotive was pulling out with the first half of the train. They sprang out of the truck, only to discover that he had spoken the truth. They swore like madmen, but there was nothing for it: they had to remain where they were.

Schlump and Jolles went into the little town to look for quarters, and the others began to pack. Toward evening they came straggling into the town to look for quarters. The place was full of soldiers in field-gray uniform—the houses, the streets, the squares. At last they were able to locate a room and to deposit their precious wares. All afternoon they dragged back and forth between the tracks and the house, bringing in their supplies. And in the evening they wandered round the streets. Jolles had found out that their headquarters staff had also landed in this town, and the soldiers could come up and get their pay, with all arrears. Schlump got a fifty-mark note which he placed in his back pocket. That money was going to come in handy. The cafés and saloons were jammed with soldiers, and the men stood on the sidewalk and in the squares, talking excitedly. The craziest rumors flew from group to group. Some men were saying that the world revolution had broken out, that the English had dethroned their king, that the French soldiers were in revolt, and that back home all the officers had been shot. French prisoners, who had somehow broken out of their compounds and still wore their red trousers, were stopped by the soldiers, and the news was

imparted to them boisterously: the world revolution had broken out. The Frenchies smiled and did not know what to answer. Others reported that the English were ignoring the armistice; they were advancing all the time, destroying everything in their path. In the market place stood Q.M.C. soldiers, each with a cow which he was trying to sell for eight marks. One regiment of infantry had sold its machine guns to the civilians for two marks apiece. In the night shots were fired, and in the morning soldiers were found lying dead in the street. It was high time to get out. But how? They could not carry their supplies on their backs.

They stood on the main street, which ran east and west, and watched the thrilling spectacle that unrolled before their eyes: the retreat of the headquarters staff! It lasted the entire day, column after column, supply wagons, motor trucks, flocks of sheep, droves of cattle which had been brought the year before from the Ukraine; here and there a solitary soldier shoving his pack in front of him in a baby-carriage; vast droves of mares, each with her tender colt at her side; and then again motor trucks; and at the end of the procession of mares a guardsman, slightly drunk, singing to himself. He greeted every one cheerfully with the staff he held in his hand and seemed to be free from worry; after him came columns of infantry again, automobiles, dismounted artillery, engineers, Q.M.C. columns, cooks, the whole vast headquarters organization of an army. They marched close behind

each other, and it was quite impossible to cross the street. They stood in a group, Jolles, Schlump, the orderlies, the captain, all helpless. The philosopher Sack stood on one side, scowling and murmuring to himself. The captain was thinking of going to the headquarters staff and getting instructions. But every one knew that they too were helpless. Jolles found a couple of engineer troops who had been dismissed from their company. Their idea was to launch boats on the river and work their way homeward: but they were short of supplies. But Jolles did not trust them, for they were drunk and had no discipline. Finally he came across a Q.M.C. detachment who had lost their leaders. They were bargaining with a driver who was standing there with two ponies. He was prepared to take them where they wanted, and they would find food for himself and his ponies as far as the frontier.

But they were short of bread. They had managed to pick up enough canned meat, cigars, and candies in the casino, but not enough bread. Again Jolles came to their rescue. He was Johnny-on-the-spot in every street. He had discovered that there was a supply train in the freight yard. There was surely a truckload of bread. They ran across the Maas bridge to the station. The supply train was really there. But it was already being plundered by soldiers and civilians. And they had to wait their turn if they were going to get anything. They saw Belgians rolling away huge cheeses, big as millwheels. French prisoners were plundering a carload of champagne. They smashed the heads of

the bottles off and drank from the jagged edges, cutting their lips. Near them two groups of soldiers—chauffeurs and Q.M.C. troops—were fighting over a carload of furs for officers and fliers. A group of infantrymen fought round a carload of bread. Jolles came running up and shouted at the top of his voice, "Buddies! Buddies! Stop! There's enough for all of us." The fighting stopped. He sprang into the car and began to throw the bread out. And every man loaded up and ran off. The cook had taken over the philosopher's arms and guarded the supplies at home. To him they brought all their plunder. Close by stood a carload of infantry uniforms. Four men stood at the doors and threw out coats and pants. And in front of the car soldiers stood in their underwear, trying their new clothes on. Schlump, who had long been sick of his old coat, threw it away and got himself a brand new one. Jolles brought a bicycle from somewhere; they loaded up their bundles and returned to the town.

When they got near the bridge they heard shots and sharp commands. Jolles, who was riding in front, turned round and shouted, "Back! Every man that took part in the plunder will be shot." They looked at him dazed, and then at last they understood what he was saying. They turned back swiftly, fled into a stable, and hid their booty in a stall. "We nearly got it that time," said Jolles. They waited a couple of hours, and then the company—the only one that still obeyed its commanding officers—disappeared.

They returned to their quarters and sat down exhausted on their packs. Suddenly Schlump sprang up, hit himself on the forehead with his clenched fist, and shouted, "Oh, God, what a Goddam fool I am!"

He had thrown away his old coat, into the lining of which he had sewed the ten thousand marks. He ran back as fast as his legs would carry him to the freight yards. But in between the Belgians had lifted everything, and his old coat was gone. Schlump was once more a poor man.

Early the next morning they left. But the general retreat was in full swing along the military road, and they had to wait for hours before the line broke so that they could join it. In the night white notices had been plastered on all the walls. They were signed by Hindenburg, and they called on the troops not to lose their head, to form soldiers' councils and to obey their decisions. Schlump could feel what this decision must have cost the white-haired old commander, who had not abandoned his troops; and later on he understood what service the old general had rendered his people by this command and how much suffering he had prevented by it. A spirit of responsibility came over the soldiers; they went into council with their officers, and thus a horrible danger was averted: the danger of chaos.

At last Schlump and his comrades were able to break the line, and now they were part of that interminable stream which went unrolling slowly through

Belgium toward the homeland. They marched along the banks of the Maas, past wonderful castles which were reflected in the green waters of the proud, wide river. But on both sides of the road lay the first victims of the retreat: dead men, abandoned automobiles, dying horses, which kicked out blindly with their hind legs as if to unseat their new rider—death. Belgian peasants lined the roads at certain spots, each one with his neat little basket on his arm. They offered the soldiers butter, for which the fanciest prices were paid. At Huy they left the beautiful valley and the magnificent stream and wheeled to the left. Then the road began to ascend steeply, leading up to the plateau. The heavy wagons, the dismantled artillery, and the big automobiles continued by the lower road in the direction of Liège, which they had conquered four years before. Huy is an old Belgian nest, clinging to the rocks, which here descend sheer to the Maas. From the top the view was marvelous; the sun shone, and in the distance the blue woods beckoned. Jolles rode at the head of the group on his bicycle; the captain had found a walking-stick and marched side by side with the horses; behind him were his two orderlies. Schlump sat on the wagon and sang cheerfully. But behind him marched the philosopher Sack, his pack on his back, his rifle on his shoulder. He was scowling, and he muttered all the time to himself. They went through quiet woods in which the autumn had kindled points of gold. The sky had retained all the colors of

the autumn, and a cool, sweet wind blew on them, and Schlump stopped singing and fell into a dream. He thought of that evening before the outbreak of the war, that warm summer evening when he kissed Johanna. He thought of the ghastly winter in the trenches, of poor Michel, of the nightingale which had captivated him, and of that long, strange dream. It seemed to him that now he would continue that dream; that Michel was now walking invisibly by his side, together with his wife, pointing to the blue hills which he was approaching. He believed, with a pure, honest belief, that in the end everything would be well; he thought of the saintly Johanna in the church at Bohain—she who was the same as the Johanna back home whom he would perhaps soon be holding in his embrace. He saw the world and its future in a thousand glorious colors. He would work, just like happy Michel, he would surely get somewhere with his work, for soon it would be peace. Peace! Soon! Peace and decency! Oh, how lovely life must be then! What a golden time that would be! Suddenly, out of pure joy, he began to laugh, so that the driver looked round at him in amazement. Schlump was all cheerful again now, and began once more to sing joyfully. Then his eyes fell on the dark philosopher, who marched along behind him.

"Man! What's the matter with you?" asked Schlump, laughing. "Have you got a pain somewhere?"

The dark philosopher rolled his eyes and looked at him wildly: "I ate my last bread the day before yesterday."

"But man alive! Isn't there plenty of bread here, and meat, and everything you could wish for?"

The philosopher raised his voice till the woods re-echoed with it. "Do you think," he thundered, "that I am a thief, a robber, a plunderer? All that you offer me has been stolen. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

Schlump stared at him in boundless astonishment and made no answer. They had now advanced far into the hills of Belgium, the road wound from one height to the next, they descended into a small valley and went up the steep road on the other side. Before them and behind them they saw that long, long train moving forward slowly. It was as though the road had become alive and went along with them eastward, homeward.

The evening came. They found shelter for the horses and for themselves. Early in the morning they continued. The captain complained that he had had to sleep on straw. Whereupon the soldiers laughed, and Jolles said, "You ought to be glad, Captain, that you weren't in the war, because sometimes we had to sleep in sh—." They rode through Stavelot and came to Malmedy. Here they learned that the revolution had really broken out in Berlin and in other big towns. They halted for a long time near the railway station.

There was a rumor that a train was standing ready to draw out. Jolles said, "We haven't got much more food left. The best thing would be for every man to

try to get home as soon as he can." Thereupon the men made up their packs and divided out the bread and the canned meat. The captain stood among a group of officers. The philosopher undertook to stand guard over the captain's share.

On the other side of the railway station a terrible sight greeted them. A trainload of flour had been derailed, and the flour lay between the tracks, so that they sank knee-deep into it. There actually was a train in the station, ready to pull out, and the soldiers ran back and forth along the track looking for a place. But the train was packed. Every section was jammed with men; the windows had been smashed as if there had been a terrific fight for every place. Suddenly there was a whistle from Jolles. He had managed to find the brakeman's shelter: Schlump and he clambered in; the others—the cook and the orderlies—had disappeared.

And still more soldiers continued to climb on to the train; Russian prisoners in their clay-colored uniforms perched on the buffers and on the roofs of the cars. A large detachment of recruits, young boys most of them, kept running up and down the platform. They clambered up on the steps of the carriages and of the brakeman's shelter. Schlump put his head out of the window: "Boys," he said, "hold on fast when that train starts."

And suddenly the dark philosopher Sack turned up, with his pack and his arms. He went up and down the length of the train, searching, until he found

Schlump. He looked like a wild man; he had not shaved for several days, his eyes were deep sunk, and his voice had a funereal ring.

"Schlump," he said, "I call upon you not to forget the oath of allegiance which you took when you joined the army: I call upon you to return to your captain." He said this so loud that half the train heard him. They stared at him from all the windows, and a shout of laughter greeted his words. One man yelled at him, in a shrill, mocking voice, "Hey, feller, don't be a Goddam fool. The Kaiser himself beat it." The philosopher shrank when he heard the name of the Kaiser mentioned. He rolled his eyes—then he drew out a service pistol which he had managed to pick up somewhere and shot himself in the breast. He cast one last glance at Schlump and collapsed.

The pack slipped over his head as he fell, the straps were loose, and huge sheaves of paper covered with close writing slid out over his face.

At that instant the locomotive began to pull and the train moved out.

They pulled slowly into the hills. In the night the train came to a halt. Jolles got out. He wanted to go on foot as far as Aix-la-Chapelle, where he had a sister. It was ice-cold. The poor men who had been clinging to the steps of the cars had disappeared; so had the Russian soldiers who had climbed on to the roof. Only two of them remained: they were frozen stiff. Jolles disappeared into the darkness. The part-

ing was brief, and they never saw each other again. At Fingerrath the train stopped again, this time for good. Schlump went down into the waiting-room to try and warm himself. He was alone. A couple of soldiers were fast asleep. After an hour or two he went out again. There on the track he saw a tremendous column of soldiers. They had fallen in, twenty to a row, and waited there, silent and moveless. There were probably more than a thousand of them. They were waiting for the express from Strassburg, which would take them to Cologne. And Schlump knew that there would be a terrific struggle for places. He was right. A drumming was heard on the rails. The column of soldiers waited, tense, rigid, like some huge monster ready to spring. Two white lights came out of the night. The monster stirred—and then suddenly the storm broke. Schlump ran along with the rest. A fearful struggle took place round each window. They crawled into the engine, into the tender: the night rang with wild voices and with the splintering of glass. And then there was silence. The lights drew out into the night.

Schlump returned to the waiting-room. He was hungry. He took out food from his pack and ate in peace. He heard another train drawing in outside. He went on eating. A couple of hours later he went out again. An enormously long local train stood on the tracks. He went up to one of the cars; it was dark. Then he heard voices.

"Any room in there?" asked Schlump.

No one answered. Some one laughed. He knew then that it was hopeless. He went forward toward the engine. There he saw a faint glimmer of light: it came out of the baggage car. Schlump took the fifty-mark note out of his pocket and waited. At last some one came out—a postal official. Schlump went up to him, thrust the fifty-mark note into his hand, and said, "Good morning, buddy. Do you think you can find room for me?" The man took out a pocket lamp, examined the fifty-mark note, and answered, "You come along." He led the happy Schlump into the warm baggage car. It was cozy in there. A couple of truck drivers and Q.M.C. men sat playing cards. "You got any cigarettes?" they asked. "We'll give you whiskey." Schlump had a couple of boxes in his coat pocket. They came from the officers' restaurant in Charleroi.

The train pulled out and Schlump fell asleep, stretched out comfortably on the soft bales.

In Cologne they got down from the train. On the platform stood a detachment of sailors, their arms shouldered, barrels downward. The tunnel below the tracks was filled with arms piled up as high as the roof. The officers wore no shoulder-pieces.

Finally Schlump got on to a slow train for Cassel, and there he found another train marked Halle. There was still some room. But they had to wait in the unheated cars from noon till six in the evening. At four o'clock a locomotive came puffing up, coughing and wheezing—but the train would not budge: it just shud-

dered faintly. At six o'clock a second locomotive came along. The journey to Halle lasted twelve hours. There Schlump got immediate connections—and he was astounded that things were still running smoothly. He traveled another twelve hours. And when he stepped out at the station of his home town the conductor asked him for his ticket. Schlump looked at him, dazed. "Buddy," he said, "they didn't give us time to get tickets."

He stepped out into the station, a simple soldier, just as on the day when he had left.

There, on the steps leading out of the station, stood some one. The saintly Johanna. Schlump ran up to her.

"What are you waiting for?"

She looked at him, happy. "I've been meeting every train that came in," she answered.

And in front of every one he folded her in his arms and kissed her.

Hand in hand they went out, to find his mother, who did not dream, just then, that the happiest moment of her life had come.